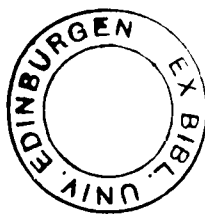


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"THE THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE."

by

REV. PRINCIPAL HENRY SIMPSON CURR, M.A., B.D., B.Litt.(Oxon.)



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THE THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

The reputation of Gladstone is in eclipse at present. That need be no cause for wonder. The tides of fame ebb and flow as they do in every phase of human affairs. At the beginning of the present century his name was a household word, not only in the United Kingdom but in many European capitals. The furore, which the publication of Morley's biography created, recalled the reception given to Macaulay's "History of England". In such circumstances it was inevitable that a reaction should develop, and a strong one at that, for Sir Isaac Newton's dictum that action and reaction are equal applies to a much wider field than physical science. Less and less attention seems to be paid to Gladstone as the successive decades of the century, which follows that in which he flourished like a tree planted by rivers of water, come and go. But these things make no difference to his intrinsic greatness, since his title to everlasting remembrance rests on foundations which may fairly be described as unassailable. Thus he was four times Prime Minister, a record which has never been equalled, and is unlikely to be surpassed, especially in view of the extraordinary fact that he had passed his seventieth year before three of the occasions on which he was requested by Queen Victoria to form an administration. Lord Balfour said no more than the sober truth when he described Gladstone as "the greatest member of the greatest deliberative assembly/

assembly that the world has seen."

While his pre-eminence as a statesman and Parliamentarian is his chief claim to an abiding place in the temple of fame, his versatility was also the delight and despair of his multitudinous admirers. He could have achieved outstanding distinction in half-a-dozen fields. Thus he was anxious as a young man to read for holy orders. Cardinal Manning, who began life as an Anglican, and who was Gladstone's friend and contemporary at Oxford, said of him that he was more fit to be a clergyman than himself. In deference to the wishes of his father, Sir John Gladstone, and in the loving wisdom of God Who sees the end from the beginning, he abandoned that ambition, but there can be no doubt at all that, if he had pursued it, he would have become in due season a mighty preacher and prince of the church. In that same connection Morley observes that he had the making of an evangelist "as irresistible as Wesley or as Whitefield". The same may be said of other fields including commerce and high finance. But when all has been said regarding what Gladstone might have been or become if he had elected to pursue some other path than that which he actually followed, there can be no doubt at all that he would never have succeeded in making such a vast contribution to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of the English people save as a statesman. For that reason his political activities which extended from December 13th, 1832, when he was elected M.P. for Newark until May 3rd, 1894, when he resigned the Premiership will always be of interest and importance to the historian for their own sake.

But/

But the same cannot be said of his other labours despite the fact that he addressed himself to them with much the same aptitude and assiduity as he did to the business of legislation and administration. Their claims on the remembrance and interest of posterity are extrinsic rather than intrinsic. They have little permanent value, and any justification of their study lies in the light which they throw upon a unique figure. That is a strong expression but it is amply warranted as a comparison with his contemporary and rival, Lord Beaconsfield, will surely and soon reveal. D'Israeli was a very great man. It has been well said of him that he differed from Gladstone in everything but genius. Nevertheless when the two are compared, Gladstone surpasses D'Israeli as the sun the moon. In many great cities including London and Edinburgh, the effigy of Gladstone may still be seen, lending dignity to the streets, while there are few, if any, similar monuments to D'Israeli. In view of that, everything connected with such a titanic personality is of interest, if not of importance. His Homeric studies, even although they won the approval of Sir Richard Jebb, will hardly repay consideration save as a sidelight on their author. They have been dismissed in some competent quarters as fanciful and the same may be said of other of his multifarious excursions into various spheres of life and learning. Likewise it is to be feared that his theological writings must be classed in the same category. Their worth has been variously appraised. Dr Dollinger, a contemporary leader of the Old Catholic Movement, and a dear personal friend, regarded Gladstone as the best theologian/

theologian in England. Mr Herbert Paul, the author of an admirable brief biography, refers to him as an acute and learned theologian. Viscount Bryce was much nearer the mark in characterising him as an accomplished amateur.

There can be no doubt of his profound interest in theological questions, if one hardly feels equal to accepting the opinion of his son-in-law, the Rev. Harry Drew, that he was a born theologian. He read widely on the subject. He endeavoured to keep in touch with new developments. His pen was often busy in the discussion of religious and theological issues. He has been well and truly described as an impassioned theologian whose tenets were more distinguished by heat than light. But the truth was that he was so deeply interested in theology because he was, first and foremost, a man of God. Religion was the keynote of his life. "This was the ultimate secret of his power to go on with his incessant labours whether the skies were dark or bright" writes Professor Ramsay Muir. "This was the secret also, of the loyalty, almost approaching to adoration, which he inspired in thousands of simple folk. 'You do not know how those of us regard you' Spurgeon wrote to him in 1882, 'who feel it a joy to live when a premier believes in righteousness. We believe in no man's infallibility, but it is restful to be sure of one man's integrity'. Finally it was this which gave unity to his amazing pilgrimage of opinion, and which ballasted a noble ship that lacked the anchorage of fixed and clearly defined political theories." (Prime Ministers of the Nineteenth Century. p. 235) The more one studies Gladstone, the more one is disposed to endorse/

endorse the truth of these words.

Gladstone's theology is thus the intellectual expression of his faith in God and in Jesus Christ, His Only Son. Out of the fulness of his heart he spoke and wrote on the things of God. It has been finely said by Professor John Baillie that theology is religion becoming self-conscious. That is undoubtedly the key to an understanding of Gladstone's studies in the queen of sciences. He loved God with all his mind as well as with all his heart. That could be demonstrated in many ways. One line of evidence need only be mentioned for more reasons than one. Gladstone, unlike D'Israeli, had not been endowed with an original mind in the sense that he was an independent thinker. "All his life he had undergone 'influences'," writes Mr Francis Birrell, "first that of Canning, then that of Peel, of Bright in the crucial sixties, and finally, and very powerfully, of Acton." (Gladstone. p.141). The same is true in his mental history with the difference that he was as loyal to the earliest captains of his soul in old age as he was when he left Oxford. He has told us that he owed his soul to four masters, next to the Four Gospels. These were Aristotle, Augustine, Dante, and Butler. It will be seen at once that all except Aristotle were Christian teachers. Only a man whose interests were steeped in religion could have made such a confession. We may apply to him the phrase of Tertullian in which he speaks of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*. In combination with his powerful intelligence, such a mentality made it inevitable that Gladstone should take to theology like a duck to water.

His/

His emotional temperament helps to explain his piety, as well as his fondness for theological studies. It also throws a flood of light upon an aspect of these which, at the first glance, seems to be very perplexing. Morley describes it in an observation to the effect that in theology his opinions had no history. His views remained unaltered for more than fifty years. That is all the more remarkable in the light of two facts. On the one hand, he lived through a period when theological upheavals of such magnitude took place that they have been compared by Dr C.C.J. Webb with the Reformation. "The Times" in an editorial on Queen Victoria and her reign, observed that during that period the foundations of British Christianity were shaken to their foundations by the rise of Continental humanism and rationalism. But Gladstone cared for none of these things. He was secure on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture. He was not ignorant of these revolutionary changes but his theology defied modification. He never ceased to be well pleased with it. The other fact is the changes in his own outlook on other questions. It has been observed that his religious and theological conservatism contrasted with his readiness to change in other directions. In churchmanship the fervent evangelical became a zealous sacerdotalist. In politics "the rising hope of the high and unbending Tories, as Macaulay called him, became the darling of the proletariat. But in theology he ended where he began.

While his emotional disposition may have contributed largely to this theological immobility, account must also be taken of his/

his simplicity of mind. What he says of Homer in his admirable Primer is applicable to himself. "The simple and healthy realism of Homer indisposed him alike to physics and metaphysics" (p. 129). Gladstone had no interest in scientific research, and, as for metaphysics, Huxley remarked that he did not understand the meaning of the word. For example, he commends Christianity as "the least abstract of all religions" (Morley II. p. 308). Such a statement gives weight and substance to the judgment of the Rev. W. Tuckwell in estimating Gladstone's qualifications for theological discussion. "He could meet particular details, the swine-miracle, the Mosaic firmament, the cosmogonic succession, with dialectic but nescient dexterity; the main assault he left altogether unopposed, because, like his old friend Liddon, he had never been educated to understand it." ("Gladstone". Sir Wemyss Reid. p. 472) On the other hand, it is surely significant that a man of Gladstone's spiritual and intellectual stature remained loyal to the conservative and evangelical position in theology. It is surely possible to exaggerate his simplicity. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, and he could never have been what he was, or did what he did, if he had been nothing more than "radiantly simple", as Lord Kilbracken remarks, quoting Robert Louis Stevenson. (Reminiscences p. 123). Is it not written that it has seemed good in the Father's sight to hide the mystery of godliness from the wise and prudent, and to reveal it unto babes? (Matthew XI. 25-26)

In making a preliminary survey of the material which is available/

available for a survey of Gladstone's theology, it is necessary to draw a distinction between his writings on ecclesiastical and theological fields. The former exceed the latter in bulk. That is only what might be expected since "England's greatest citizen was also her greatest Churchman." His earliest books dealt with ecclesiastical problems, and to the end of his life he was ever busy with papers on church questions and politics. But these must be carefully distinguished from his theological essays. That distinction is not always observed by the authors of articles and books dealing with his life and work. In the hands of some writers, theology becomes a term capable of such wide application as to be positively misleading. Thus a discussion of Gladstone's theology may contain no reference to his studies on Bishop Butler. The explanation usually is a significant one. Such papers are the work of men who make no pretensions to be trained theologians, a detail which is surely illuminative.

Gladstone himself was always careful to distinguish theological and ecclesiastical topics. He defined theology as the science of religion. In the eighth volume of his collected essays, felicitously described as "Gleanings of Past Years," he defines the contents as ecclesiastical and theological, and it is easy to classify the contents in two groups with these headings. It may be that, in the case of such a loose thinker as Gladstone, the attempt to enforce such a differentiation must result in the impoverishment of a study like this. Indeed there are three phases of his thinking which are inseparable.

One/

One is his religious experience. That will repay study, and ample materials survive for the purpose. Again, there is his churchmanship, and that too would require a large volume to itself. Thirdly, mention must be made of his contributions to theological study in the narrower sense of the word. The three tend to flow together, a veritable threefold cord not to be quickly broken. There is room for an estimate of Gladstone from the triple standpoint. Wide qualifications and research would be required for such an enterprise since, as Lord Rosebery facetiously observed, Gladstone's biography can only be adequately undertaken by a limited liability company. Our present concern is solely with his theological opinions, a subject of sufficient magnitude to warrant separate treatment.

Information with regard to his convictions on such matters, for no other word will do in this connection, as we shall soon have occasion to see, can be gathered from a variety of sources. Indeed materials are not yet complete for a thorough survey of the subject. His vast correspondence has not yet been explored to the uttermost, although selections of his letters have been published. It is, however, unlikely that, when this vast mass of written matter has been carefully examined, much new light will be thrown on his piety or theology, apart from some happy turn of phrase, or some illuminating sentence. It is almost certain that all his cherished beliefs have been expressed in a form which has made them readily accessible. As it is, there is a certain amount of repetition in his publications on theological questions. These comprise but few books, and consist/

consist mainly of essays, contributed to secular journals with the exception of several articles in "Good Words", a popular religious monthly in the latter part of last century. These details are likewise noteworthy in forming a preliminary estimate of the value attaching to his theological effusions. He was essentially a lay theologian. The earliest book which Macaulay has immortalized by his famous review, was first issued in 1838, the year after Queen Victoria's accession. This was the work on the relations of church and state, entitled, "The State in its Relations with the Church". It was followed in 1840 by a second on a closely connected subject, "Church Principles considered in their Results". Neither of these volumes can be considered as theological in the strict sense of the term. They may be more correctly classified as ecclesiastical, although some reference to them must be made since they contain material relevant to a consideration of his theology in the proper sense of the term. At the end of his life which almost coincided with that of the great Queen whom he served so long and so loyally, he published an edition of Bishop Butler's Works (1896), and in the same year a volume of essays, entitled "Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler". In 1892 there appeared a small book containing popular papers on Biblical subjects which first saw the light in "Good Words". In addition there are many articles and essays on religious, and ecclesiastical subjects which furnish varying quotas of information, while the enormous literature, which has gathered round him like the satellites of some vast planet, yields endless bits and pieces which bear more or less directly on our subject.

CHAPTER II.

It can hardly be expected that anything resembling a scientific and systematic discussion of theological questions can be found in Gladstone's works. There can be no doubt of his deep and abiding interest in the subject. Indeed it may well be argued that he had qualifications which would have enabled him to make a useful contribution to its study. He was by no means lacking in spiritual insight, intellectual power, unlimited capacity for industry, and general culture, but his path of life lay in a different direction. One might almost have written his paths, for his versatility was amazing. Morley thus characterises its quantity and quality. "Truly was it said of Fenelon, that half of him would be a great man, and would stand out more clearly as a great man than does the whole, because it would be simpler. So of Mr Gladstone." (1. p.184). There are, however, limits to human achievement, and it was inevitable that, in some spheres of his interest, Gladstone could, in the nature of things, be no more than a dabbler. It must be acknowledged that theology was one of these.

One reason amongst others lay in his lack of training. He graduated at Oxford with a double first in classics and mathematics, a distinction which he shared with his earliest political chief, Sir Robert Peel. But he never enjoyed the mental discipline and training which a course of study at a theological school can alone impart. The result was that
a/

a great deal of what he wrote on theological subjects is impaired in value by that fact. He had read widely but his reading tended to settle in grooves. Thus he read the works of Augustine in thirty-two octavo volumes when he was a bachelor in the Albany. One cannot help thinking that the time might have been better spent in acquainting himself more fully with the general history of Christian doctrine. His theological studies were largely determined by his predilections. That is a good enough course to follow after a foundation has been laid in a general survey of the field covered by scientific theology but without such a preparatory process the student is apt to lose a sense of proportion. In addition, it should be noted that Gladstone had the barrister's gift of rapidly acquainting himself with a subject to a degree which enabled him to speak or write about it to some purpose, but such a talent has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. These considerations must be kept in view when an attempt is made to indicate his views on the outstanding problems of theological science.

In general, his position can fairly be described as evangelical and conservative. On this point Mr G.W.E. Russell writes "He was, first and foremost, in the innermost core of his being, an Evangelical, clinging with the strong and simple assurance of a childlike faith to the great central realities of personal sinfulness and personal salvation through the Cross of Christ." (Contemporary Review. "Mr Gladstone's Theology" Vol. 73. p. 778). He had been reared in an evangelical home, and he never left his first love despite the fact that he became in/

in early manhood an enthusiastic and life-long disciple of the Oxford Movement. At some points it seems as if his beliefs did not coincide with those usually regarded as evangelical. His doctrine of justification by faith was not that of the Reformers as we shall discover at a later stage. In the main, however, his sympathies were with the historic orthodoxy of the Christian Church, although he had a great aversion to labels, ecclesiastical and otherwise.

In considering his contributions to theological study, attention must be called to certain features which are illustrated on almost every page. Unless these are clearly grasped, the task of understanding and appreciating his characteristic tenets is made harder. One was his intensity. There were never any half-measures with Gladstone. Whatsoever his hand found to do in writing, or in anything else, he did with all his might. That is wholly admirable up to a point. There can be nothing but commendation for the thoroughness with which Gladstone handled any and every subject to which he addressed himself. But the same thoroughness of treatment can cause a man to lose the wood in the trees, and to forget that he is not the only pebble on the beach, and that God fulfils Himself in many ways. There is considerable justification for Mr E.F. Benson's witty words. "When once he had convinced himself on any subject, it ceased to be his opinion, and became a cosmic truth, which it was the duty of every right-minded person to uphold." (As We Were. p. 108).

For that reason, he might have objected to his theological views/

views being described as opinions. He seems to have been somewhat suspicious of that word when used in connection with religion and theology. In his treatise on "Church Principles", published at the beginning of his career, and also in one of his essays on Bishop Butler, written at the conclusion of his life's labours, he has some scathing animadversions to make on the use of the term. He declares that dishonour is done to religious connections when they are described as matters of opinion. A true Christian would be shocked if he were told that the Divinity of Christ is merely a question of opinion. He was ever a great master of language to such an extent that his critics accused him of sophistry. Thus he differentiates faith, belief, and opinion, the first involving a moral element, and being equivalent to consent. Belief is tantamount to assent since it lacks the volitional factor. "The devils also believe, and tremble". (James II. 19). He defines opinion in these terms. "Opinion is a word of larger range and looser texture. As belief falls in this respect just indicated, before conviction, so opinion falls below belief, has a larger toleration of doubt, does not acknowledge in as stringent a form the obligation to consequent action is scarcely applicable with any propriety to truth when at once obvious and necessary, belongs to the early stages of investigations as yet but partially developed, obtains no wide favour in the higher regions of philosophy, and, as to theology, remains wholly (so to speak) in the outer courts". (Studies Subsidiary to Butler's Works. p. 285). In the light of such a sentence, it is impossible to/

to describe Gladstone's theology as a mere bundle of opinions, no matter how justifiable the expression may be in actual point of fact and usage. No weaker word than principle or conviction will suit the purpose. In passing, allusion may be made to an observation by Mr Osbert Burdett, since it throws a flood of light on Gladstone's mental limitations. "Opinions he understood; ideas never." (W.E. Gladstone p. 19)

Another result of this intensity, inevitable in a nature so highly strung, was that he had an astonishing power for persuading himself that, what he wanted to believe, was indeed a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. Too often the wish is father to the thought in his theology as in other ways. Queen Victoria said of him that he could convince himself that black was white. Huxley said the same thing in even more telling fashion. "Do you still believe in Gladstone?" he observed to a friend. "That man has the greatest intellect in Europe. He was born to be a leader of men, but he has debased himself to be a follower of the masses. If working-men were to-day to vote by a majority that two and two made five, to-morrow Gladstone would believe it, and find them reasons for it which they had never dreamed of." (L. Huxley. Life of T.H. Huxley. I. p.318). These are severe words but they are not without considerable justification. Gladstone has an extraordinary power of making the worse reason seem to be the better. Thus he defended "Ecce Homo", and he denounced "Robert Elsmere," although both represent serious departures from/

from traditional beliefs regarding Our Lord's Divinity. He was swayed excessively by emotional consideration. In justice to him, however, let another saying of Huxley be quoted to the effect that the nervous man rules the world.

His temperament may also explain still another feature of his theological works, and that is their excessive attention to detail. If it be true that the first canon of art is to know what to omit, then Gladstone fails lamentably. He pursues his subject into every nook and cranny with a persistence which tends to obscure the main issue. John Bright compared him to a navigator who must needs explore every creek and inlet. He did not seem to realise that there are two or three arguments on which a case rests. If these can be discredited, the effect is comparable to a serious injury inflicted on a vital organ of the body. It may well prove fatal so that there is no need to break every bone. In the same strain, it may be remarked that Gladstone never came to realise sufficiently that it is almost impossible to prove any point up to the hilt so that there is no room left for dubiety. In this respect he does not seem to have followed with full fidelity the dictum of his master, Bishop Butler, that probability is the very guide of life. On the contrary Gladstone cannot rest satisfied until he has spiked the last of the enemy's guns.

A brief reference must be made to his irritating habit of qualifying what he has got to say. It has been observed that he could argue for Free Trade with constant reservations in/

in favour of Protection. That makes it hard at times to discover what his theological opinions precisely are. They are hedged about with all manner of qualifications. That was due to his habitual caution which contrasted with his courage and impetuousness so markedly that it is hard to believe that qualities so diverse could cohere in the same personality until it is remembered that we are all combinations of contradictions, and the bigger the man the sharper are the contrasts which his character will offer. Some said of Our Lord in the days of His flesh that He was Elias, and others Jeremias.

The student of Gladstone's theology must also reckon with his prolixity. D'Israeli's characterisation of him as "intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity" has often been quoted. Less familiar is his rival's remark about Gladstone's style that it gave him a headache. That is hard to understand in view of the fact that Gladstone's mind and imagination were soaked in Homer. His involved sentences contrast strangely with the lucidity and directness of the classics. But there were other influences which led Gladstone captive, and one was Bishop Butler. The latter's style is so bad that his fame has been achieved in spite of it. Butler has got a way of multiplying words to no end due to his fondness for all manner of qualifications which usually can be taken for granted. Gladstone shared this fault, although his style is much more elegant and graceful than that of Butler. As a matter of general interest, this overflowing fountain of words seems to harmonize well with his characteristic personality. Copiousness/

Copiousness was one of its conspicuous features. There was ever enough and to spare in all that he said and did and wrote. Lord Birkenhead thus refers to this Divine plenty in connection with Gladstone's correspondence. "Among modern letter-writers, Mr Gladstone towers high; with him, earnest, inexhaustible, infinite, the pen was no instrument of diversion." (Law, Life, Letters. 1. p. 40). But as in all else that is human, Gladstone, along this line of perennial fulness, had the defects of his excellencies, as his theological papers with their wearisome verbiage prove.

The present Archbishop of Canterbury emphasises an important aspect of Gladstone's thinking on theological questions when he writes in an essay on "Mr Gladstone and the Oxford Movement": that the great statesman was a deep and sincere believer in dogma, in revealed truth, in what Von Hugel calls "the givenness of religion." (Nineteenth Century. 1933. p. 375). This is of a piece with his abiding veneration for authority in every walk of life, pre-eminently for the Crown. He describes the Christian religion as one of "influences which transcend though they do not oppose the understanding." (Church Principles. p.36). For him the authority of the Bible and of the Church were final. His lack of originality made him all the more prone to this tendency which also helps to explain his conservatism. If a doctrine or institution had survived the test of time, it had per se a commanding claim on his allegiance.

CHAPTER III.

Turning first to Gladstone's view on Holy Scripture, let it be said at once that, if ever there was a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, who made the Bible a lamp to his feet and a light to his way, he was that man. Early in life he began to study the Scriptures with loving care, and the habit remained with him until the end of his days. His Oxford friends said of him that none read the Bible more nor knew it better than Gladstone. In the full tide of his career he could write in this strain. "On most occasions of very sharp pressure or trial, some word of scripture has come home to me as if borne on angels' wings. Many could I recollect. The Psalms are the great storehouse." (Morley l. p.201). In view of this life-long devotion to the Bible, it seems strange that there should be so little trace of the characteristic diction of the Scriptures in his writings or speeches. Quotations, direct or indirect, are not very common. Indeed his style seems to have been affected more by the classics and Butler than by the Bible. In that respect he differed from his friend and ministerial colleague, John Bright, whose fine simplicity of speech was largely due to his familiarity with the Authorised Version. It is far otherwise with the influence of the Bible on his heart and mind. In his passion for civic and domestic righteousness, the mantle of Elijah rested upon him. If religion was the key-note of his life, the Bible was the key-note of his religion.

In such circumstances, it is interesting and instructive to consider his beliefs regarding the nature and authority of Holy Writ, especially in the light of modern criticism. He was in the full enjoyment of his unique powers when such men as Wellhausen and Robertson Smith took the field in favour of a new conception of the Old Testament. Gladstone was fully cognisant of this far-reaching trend in Victorian theology, giving ample evidence that he had been at pains to acquaint himself with the conclusions reached, and with the evidence on which they were based, in so far as his complete ignorance of Hebrew made that possible. His reactions were embodied in a series of popular papers, first published in "Good Words", and subsequently embodied in a little book with the singularly felicitous title "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." He traverses much the same ground in other essays, published in learned monthlies but there is no great change in his views. In this book he ranges over such questions as the Biblical cosmogony, the moral difficulties of the Old Testament, the Psalter, and the corroboration of the Biblical narratives by archaeology. They follow the usual lines pursued by conservative defenders of the Scriptures, and it is needless to expound them in detail. The real point of interest for our present purpose lies in the light which they throw on Gladstone's attitude to the critical view of the Old Testament, for the New is scarcely mentioned. In other respects, he simply repeats what has already been said many times over.

In/

In endeavouring to make clear his position, one is handicapped by his predilection for reservations and qualifications. In general, it may be said that he accepts and defends the traditional theory of the Bible as the inspired Word of God but with modifications so serious that he sometimes conveys the impression of having a foot in either camp. In illustration, we may take such sentences as these. "And yet, upon the very threshold, I embrace, in what I think a substantial sense, one of the great canons of modern criticism, which teaches us that the Scriptures are to be treated like any other book in the trial of their title." (Impregnable Rock. p. 6) And again, "I have already made it clear that I yield, as a matter of course, to the conclusions of linguists in their own domain, not only respectful attention, but provisional assent". (Ibid p.181). The obvious course would seem to be the full and frank acceptance of modern theories regarding the structure of the Pentateuch whereby it is regarded as not Mosaic but a mosaic, to take an outstanding example. Such theories inevitably involve great changes in the estimate which is formed of its historical trustworthiness of the Old Testament. One would have expected Gladstone to have gone the whole length with modern critical scholarship in its more moderate form, all the more so because he declined to accept the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Having conceded so much, he might well be expected to align himself completely with the newer position.

On the contrary, he manfully maintains that the historicity of the Old Testament is unaffected. He argues for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch on the grounds that his Homeric studies had convinced him of the improbability that there was not some master mind who was ultimately responsible for such masterpieces as the opening books of the Bible as in the case of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Again he defends the scientific accuracy of the Creation narratives in Genesis to the last syllable. It is not very easy to reconcile such positions with adhesion to the basic principles of Biblical Criticism as stated in the preceding paragraph. There seems much to be said for the contention to which reference has already been made that, if he fully understood these critical maxims, he failed to appreciate all their implications. That is partly due to his simplicity of mind and spirit, and partly to the fact that he read too much and thought too little. Of his writings it has been well and truly said that he wrote too much and too quickly. The same verdict may be passed on his omnivorous reading. He read too much and too rapidly. He did not take enough time to think things together. Indeed he was, first and foremost, a man of action rather than a man of thought. These considerations may help to explain these incongruities and inconsistencies in his attitude to the critical approach to the Bible.

His general attitude to the Scriptures is thoroughly old-fashioned. That is illustrated by his treatment of the problem presented by the moral difficulties of the Old Testament. These/

These weighed heavily on the minds of the pious Victorian. Professor Henry Drummond, whose work as an evangelist amongst the students of Edinburgh University is still remembered in the Scottish capital, has left it on record that a large part of his voluminous correspondence on religious subjects was concerned with these very stones of stumbling. It is claimed that the doctrine of progressive revelation has materially eased the situation, although the Fundamentalist feels disposed to reply that the cure is worse than the disease. Gladstone himself never refers to progressive revelation but rather strives with might and main to reconcile these perplexing stories and sayings with the goodness and severity of God. In one passage, however, he uses an argument to which there seems to be no conclusive answer. These are his words.

"Admit that they leave a moral difficulty unexplained. It is a volume which, taken as a whole, bears a testimony, comprehensive, wonderful, and without rival, to truth and righteousness. How are we to treat the case? I answer by an illustration. I am reading a work full of algebraic quotations which I cannot wholly solve, cannot wholly comprehend. Should I on this account renounce and condemn the book? No; I should reserve it in hope of a complete solution in the future. This seems to be the mode which is dictated alike by reverence and good sense, not only in the case of the Holy Bible, but in regard to the mysterious problems which encounter us when our eyes traverse the field of human destinies at large.

We know the abundant richness of the gift we hold and enjoy; as to the small portion of light at present withheld, we contentedly abide our time." (Later Gleanings. p.395). Nothing could be better, either in form, or in substance.

The admirer of Gladstone can wish that he had had the wisdom to take such high and holy ground in his famous controversies with Huxley regarding the Old Testament story of the Creation, and the destruction of the Gadarene swine. Gladstone made the egregious mistake of meeting an opponent on his own ground with the result that he makes a poor showing, if he escapes the criticism of being ridiculous. Thus he labours to prove that the cosmogony of Genesis is absolutely accurate in place of laying stress on these features whereby scientific investigation was launched on right lines. Wellhausen paid a noble tribute to that tale of wondrous days and nights when he said that it made science possible by sharply differentiating God and the material universe. Gladstone does not fail to call attention to these aspects of the narrative. Thus he comments on the sagacity evidenced by the choice of days and nights, so clearly demarcated in contrast to the seasons, the months, or the years, to bring home to the primitive mentality the conception of an ordered sequence in time. But instead of magnifying these phases, and using them as evidence for the ultimate veracity of the whole, Gladstone enters the scientific arena to which he was a comparative stranger, and succeeds in drawing upon himself a series of slashing attacks, notably a trenchant article in "The Fortnightly Review".

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He follows the same futile tactics in dealing with Huxley's criticisms of Our Lord's conduct in connection with the destruction of the Gadarene swine. The latter had made the consent of Christ that the evil spirits, whom He had expelled from a demoniac, should enter into a vast herd of swine with the result that the latter rushed into the sea and were drowned, a subject of censure. Huxley stigmatised the incident as unjustifiable interference with other people's property. For that reason, the claims of Christ are gravely compromised. Gladstone's reply consists in an elaborate attempt to prove that this Gadarene community were of Jewish stock, and, consequently, subject to the Law of Moses. The keeping of swine was thus illegal, and Our Lord by this action was only enforcing the law which they must have known and ought to have respected. Huxley and himself argue this point with Homeric vigour and chivalry, appealing to all manner of authorities in defence of their contentions. Gladstone ought to have resorted to the argument just used. He could easily have appealed to the evidence furnished by the miracle of mercy in relieving the demoniac, and by a thousand similar deeds of loving-kindness. The incident seems so conspicuous because it is so unusual. Its adverse testimony, if that can be established, is outweighed by a host of other factors.

In dealing with the Old Testament, Gladstone appears to the best advantage when he dwells on its religious message.

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He has nothing new to say. That could hardly be expected at the end of the nineteenth century in a field which had been so well worked and for so long, and yet the sympathetic reader is refreshed ever and anon by delightful details of exposition due to Gladstone's supreme ability. It matters not what subject he handles. He hardly seems to be able to avoid some observation which is as fresh and forcible as his own personality. Thus he points out that the election of Abraham to be a channel of blessing for all the families of the earth enriched all concerned and impoverished none. Again he quotes a fine saying of John Bright that he was prepared to stake the whole issue of a Divine revelation on the Psalter. His pages abound in these touches which redeem the commonplace character of the main arguments and contentions.

In the same vein, there is a fine passage in "The Impregnable Rock" in which he disclaims all specialised knowledge of Biblical science, and yet claims to be heard with respect because he has had such a long and varied experience of men and affairs. "Few persons of our British race have lived through a longer period of incessant argumentative contention, or have had a more diversified experience in trying to ascertain for purposes immediately practical, the difference between tenable and untenable propositions". (Impregnable Rock p.260) But these words, fine as they are, prove that he did not grasp the difference that exists between questions of practical and academic import. In the last analysis, the canons of judgment are the same/

same, but the evidence on which conclusions are based, may be of a different order. Nevertheless even the judgment of the specialist should approve itself in the last analysis to the mind of the ordinary man. Walter Bagehot quotes the saying of a great man of the world that there is someone wiser than Voltaire and wiser than Napoleon, *c'est tout le monde*. (Biographical Studies. p.256).

Here, then, is the judgment of a man, who was almost as representative an example of sturdy common-sense as Dr Johnson, on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. It would be an easy task to summarize the reasoning in a sentence or two but it seems to gain in force when stated in Gladstone's resonant prose. "We have, then, in the historic Moses a great and powerful genius, an organising and constructive mind. Degenerate ages cannot equip and furnish forth illustrious founders, only at the most the counterfeits or shadows of them. Moses belongs to the great class of nation-makers; to a class of men, who have a place by themselves in the history of politics, and who are among the rarest and highest of the phenomena of our race. And he stands in harmonic harmony with his work. But we are now apparently asked to sever the work from the worker, and to refer it to some doubtful and nameless person; whereas it is surely obvious or probable that the author of a work so wonderful, and so far beyond example, so elaborate in its essential structure, and so designed for public use, could hardly fail to associate his name with it as if written upon a rock, and with a pen of iron. For, be it recollected, that name/

name was the seal and stamp of the work itself. According to its own testimony, he was the apostolos (Ex. XIX. 16-23 and passim), the messenger, who brought it from God, and gave it to the people. If the use of his name was a fiction, it was one of these fictions which cannot escape the brand of falsehood; for it altered essentially the character of the writings to which it was attached." (Ibid p.193). That argument has often been used and as often answered, but it seems to gain added force when it is stated by one who, like Moses, was "a nation-maker."

Goldwin Smith in his little book "My Memory of Gladstone" refers to his belief in plenary inspiration (p.93). There is no support for such a statement in his paper on Biblical inspiration which appears in the volume of Butler studies. Butler himself has nothing to say on the subject. Gladstone's discussion takes its rise in his desire to apply to it Butler's characteristic doctrine regarding man's comparative ignorance of God's ways and works. He rightly and strongly insists on the need of purging the mind from all preconceptions as to what God will do, and how He will do it. Gladstone argues that, when the Bible is approached with an open mind and a humble heart, it is impossible to find adequate evidence for its verbal inspiration. The chief reason is the most obvious one connected with the state of the text which varies through a thousand degrees of corruption so that it is practically impossible to regain the exact words of the autographs. In such a situation Gladstone maintains that it is no longer feasible to defend the doctrine of verbal inspiration.

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There is nothing very remarkable about such reasoning which is laboured with a great waste of words. It reveals Gladstone's own limitations since, by the use of the same method, it is possible to find convincing evidence that the Scriptures are indeed inspired by God. That is provided by the claims which the Bible makes for itself, so bold, that they must be true, so remarkable that only a theory of inspiration can adequately explain them. The problem presented by Gladstone's refusal to accept any doctrine of inspiration may still seem to be perplexing in view of his conservatism. The explanation, however may be sought in such a passage as the following. Writing of evangelicals and their distinctive tenets, he observes, "Most of all, it has suffered very seriously from the recent assaults on the corpus of Scripture, which it had received simply as a self-attested volume; and on its verbal inspiration; a question which has never offered so serious a dilemma to such as are content to take their stand on the ancient constitution of the Church, and to allow its witnessing and teaching office." (Gleanings. 3. p.116). In short, for Gladstone the authority of the Bible was undergirded by the imprimatur of the Church. The latter certifies the claims of the Bible. When his ecclesiastical sympathies are called to mind, such a position is easily comprehensible. He was ever a zealous High Churchman. As for his contention, it need only be said that the major part of the Bible in the shape of the Old Testament was in existence before the Church of Christ had any being except in the mind of God.

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That may help to throw light on his distinctive position with reference to the Bible. He maintains that its authority and integrity are compatible with the acceptance of the assured results of modern criticism. "The integrity and authority, then, of the Old Testament in its substance need not and do not suffer from the recognition of a latitude, even if it be a wide latitude as to its literary form." (Impregnable Rock. p. vii). For Gladstone the supreme position of the Bible was secured by the witness of the Christian Church in all generations, and that may have made him less apprehensive of the conclusions associated with rationalistic research. On the other hand, he seems to have clung tenaciously to theories which were thoroughly conservative as the preceding extracts will abundantly show. The only conclusion to which one can come is that already stated that he had not thought things through to their logical conclusions. If he had really understood the significance of modern Biblical criticism, he would have accepted the doctrine of verbal inspiration.

CHAPTER IV.

This curious attitude of sympathy with the old and the new in theology meets us again in Gladstone's attitude to three books which were the occasion of a tremendous upheaval amongst the religious public about the middle of last century. There are times when he seems to be running with the hare, and hunting with the hounds. The works in question were Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch, "Essays and Reviews", and Sir J.R. Seeley's "Ecce Homo". These all made their appearance about the same time, and their general trend represented a distinct departure from current theological thought. Gladstone's reactions took the form of uncompromising hostility to Colenso, a mixed attitude of distrust and welcome to Essays and Reviews, and an enthusiastic reception of "Ecce Homo".

With regard to Colenso Gladstone's opinions are not definitely stated, but the legitimate inference from certain references which he makes seems to indicate that he had no favourable view. (Morley ll. pp.168-9; 313). His estimate of "Essays and Reviews" may be discovered in a letter which he wrote to Bishop Hamilton. Dealing with the acquittal of two clerical contributors to the book on a charge of heresy, he thus expresses himself: "It seems to me that these judgments are most important in their character as illustrations of a system, parts of a vast scheme of forces and events in the midst of which we stand, which seem to govern us, but which are in reality governed by a hand above. It may be that this rude/

rude shock to the mere scripturism which has too much prevailed, is intended to be the instrument of restoring a greater harmony of belief, and of the agencies for maintaining belief. But, be that as it may, the valiant soldier who has fought manfully should be, and I hope will be, of good cheer." (Morley 11. p.164)

There is a saying of Emerson that consistency is the virtue of small minds, and that must be the resort to which the student of Gladstone's theology betakes himself when confronted with such words as these, or with such acts as his appointment of Dr William Temple, one of the contributors to "Essays and Reviews", and a future Archbishop of Canterbury to the Bishopric of Exeter, a step which roused a good deal of controversy. Perhaps the wisest and most charitable course is to apply Gladstone's comparison of the church to a ship riding at anchor, ever shifting within a well-defined radius to his theological opinions. "A ship retains her anchorage yet drifts within a certain range subject to the wind and tide" (Church Principles. p.8). Of one thing we may be absolutely sure that Gladstone never knew a day or an hour in a life which exceeded four-score years when he would not have subscribed with heart and mind and soul to this simple and moving confession of faith in Christ. "All I write, and all I think, and all I hope is based on the Divinity of Our Lord - the one central hope of our poor wayward race". (Mary Drew. "Acton, Gladstone, and Others". p.1)

That is the unchanging background against which Gladstone's essays on Sir J.R. Seeley's "Ecce Homo" must be considered. Of these Canon Liddon wrote that "genius and orthodoxy have done/

done their best for the Christian honour of *Ecce Homo*. "This book was published anonymously in 1865. It was subsequently acknowledged to be the work of the Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. On its first appearance, it made quite a sensation by its daring and novel teaching on the Person and Work of Christ. In illustration of that, two contrasted comments by contemporaries may be mentioned. One eminent scholar described it as "a heaven-sent message," while the great philanthropist, Lord Shaftesbury, described it in a public meeting as "the most pestilential book ever vomited from the jaws of Hell." It is now only of historic interest, an extinct volcano, to borrow a phrase from D'Israeli. In Hastings' Dictionary of Religion and Ethics, neither the names of the author or the book appear in the index, while Gladstone has four or five references. "*Ecce Homo*" is of real and permanent value as a popular dissertation on Christian Ethics, written in a style which is full of charm, but nothing more can be claimed for it.

Gladstone made it the subject of three papers which he contributed to "Good Words" at the beginning of 1866. Their sympathetic tone is somewhat surprising in view of the book's teaching for its general tendency is hard to reconcile with Nicean orthodoxy. It was avowedly written to allay its author's dissatisfaction with the historic teaching of the Christian Church on the Person of Our Lord. With this end in view, he turns to the Synoptic Gospels, having first endeavoured to free his judgment from all prejudice and preconception. In the preface he definitely claims to have steered clear of all theological/

theological questions, promising a fuller statement of his conclusions along these lines in a later volume. The aim of the book is described as the discussion of Our Lord's object in founding the society which bears His name, and of the way in which it is adopted to attain that aim. Seeley answers these questions by a picture of a youthful idealist, prophet, and reformer, whose ministry has left an indelible impression on human history. The emphasis falls entirely on Our Lord's humanity, as the title of the book suggests. It would be unfair to say that no place is left for Christ's Divinity. The question is simply ignored. The spirit and tone of its pages, however, infallibly reveal that, whatever view their author took of Our Lord's claims to be the Son of God, his ultimate verdict would diverge in many respects from that of the Christian Church in its creeds and confessions, as well as from that of the New Testament. The Christ of "Ecce Homo" is not the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels, much less that of the Fourth Gospel, not to speak of the Pauline Epistles.

It is hard to understand how Gladstone should have entered the lists as the champion of such a book, especially in view of its somewhat patronizing attitude to Our Lord for Whom the great statesman's love and reverence knew no end. Dr Pusey took no pleasure in "Ecce Homo". "I have seldom", he told Mr Gladstone, "been able to read much at a time, but shut the book for pain, as I used to do with Renan's." (Morley. 11. p.166) There is no direct evidence as to why Gladstone was so much enamoured with the book. Conjecture does/

does not carry us very far but it may be submitted that there are two features of the book which made such a powerful appeal to Gladstone's emotional nature as to warp his judgment in its favour. These were its implicit churchmanship, and its emphasis on the ethical side of the Gospel.

The book lays a good deal of stress on the importance of the church, regarded as a spiritual society which was founded by Christ for the propagation of His ideals and ideas. For Gladstone, as a fervent High Churchman, the visible body of Christ which corresponds to His Church, was a fundamental article of faith, and Seeley's attitude to that subject falls far short of his personal convictions. Nevertheless its constant emphasis on the corporate aspect of Christianity could not but have made a deep impression on the mind of Gladstone which was always ready to see a swan in a goose.

The other consideration was, in all probability, its insistence on the moral aspect of Our Lord's teaching. Following in the steps of Bishop Butler, Gladstone was a great moralist, both in precept and practice. "There is one proposition" he wrote "which the experience of life burns into my soul; it is this, that a man should beware of letting his religion spoil his morality". (Morley ll. p.185). Such being Gladstone's conviction, it is easy to believe that his heart would leap for joy as he read these famous sentences for the first time. "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue safe that is not enthusiastic. And such an enthusiastic virtue Christ was/

was to introduce. The whole of the present volume will be a comment on that text." (Ecce Homo. p.8). These may well have been the reasons why Gladstone wrote so enthusiastically about this strange and new book concerning Jesus of Nazareth, although it must be said that in dealing with it, he refers to neither of these points at any length, but concentrates almost exclusively on its claims to be the true interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels.

He defends Seeley's thesis that the authors of Matthew, Mark, and Luke intentionally tell the story of Jesus in such a way as to convey the impression that it only gradually dawned on the minds of the Palestinian peasantry that He was none other than the Messiah, the very Christ of God. For many months Jesus was regarded as nothing more than a pre-eminent prophet. It should be noted that Gladstone focuses attention on the opinions held by His friends and neighbours. He takes no account of Our Lord's own consciousness of what He was, or of what He had come to do. No attempt is made to evaluate the testimony borne by His mighty words and works. On the contrary, Gladstone takes the view that, in the first instance, Our Lord deliberately refrained from attempting to convince men that He was what He really was lest they should be blinded by excess of light. That, however, has but a slender connection with the book itself. To state its aim in the words of the author, "What was Christ's object in founding the Society which is called by his name, and how it is adapted to/

to attain that object." (Ecce Homo. p.VI). Indeed the whole problem arises not through what Seeley says, but through what he leaves unsaid. The implications of his discussion point to Unitarianism. Gladstone seems to have realised that, and his papers are an attempt to reconcile the standpoint of Ecce Homo with that of evangelical orthodoxy.

It is easy to discover in Gladstone's essays a certain amount of uneasiness as to the soundness of Seeley's position. He admits that it demands the exclusion of the Fourth Gospel with its clear witness to the Word of God Which became flesh, and tabernacled amongst men, and also of certain stray but significant passages in the Synoptics themselves. "The disciple whom Jesus loved has given us the fullest and deepest picture of His love; and together with His love of His Person. But it has been remarked by Dean Alford that there are scattered over the pages of the Synoptics a certain number of passages which are in precise correspondence with the general strain of St. John." (Gleanings III. p.61). That is an effective rejoinder to Seeley's position that Christ bore the same relation to Christianity as Confucius to Confucianism. It is, however, eclipsed by an astonishing example of Satan casting out Satan. Referring to the Christian faith, Gladstone observes. "That religion is indeed, summed up in His Own Person. M. Renan has told us a truth we should hardly expect from him. 'He did not preach His opinions. He preached Himself.' In yet fewer words - Christianity is Christ." (Ibid p.63).

No better criticism of *Ecce Homo* and its characteristic teaching could be desired. That is the fundamental flaw in its argument. It fails to do justice to the central and crucial place which Our Lord occupies in the Gospels and in His Gospel. One always gets the impression that He was bigger far than anything He ever said or did with the exception of His death. Gladstone would have been better occupied in dwelling on that point than in trying to indicate a book which was really a sign-post to a road along which he himself would never have dreamed of travelling. Dr Pusey thus characterises Gladstone's essays which were published separately. 'What you have yourself written, I like much. But its bearings on *Ecce Homo* I can hardly divine except by way of contrast.' (Morley 11. p.167). That hits the nail on the head, for Seeley's subsequent book, "Natural Theology" manifested more clearly the direction in which his mind was moving, one that was far from the orthodox view of Our Lord's Person and Work.

CHAPTER V.

In contrast to Gladstone's sympathetic approach to "Ecce Homo", there stands his trenchant treatment of "Robert Elsmere", another popular publication in the Victorian era. Like "Ecce Homo" it is concerned with that supreme subject, the Lord Jesus Christ, but differing from it in toto by being in the form of an inordinately long novel. The authoress was Mrs Humphry Ward, a grand-daughter of Dr Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby School, and a niece of Matthew Arnold. The story concerns the spiritual pilgrimage of the eponymous hero. Robert Elsmere is an Anglican clergyman who, at the outset of his career, accepted wholeheartedly the creed of his church. He ends by abandoning orthodoxy and becoming the founder of a new cult dedicated to social service in the spirit of Christ, and based on His example. Jesus Himself is reduced to the level of a prophet and reformer, the greatest that ever was or will be, but not the only-begotten Son of God.

The book enjoyed a tremendous vogue largely due to Gladstone's review in "The Nineteenth Century." This took the shape of a spirited attack in view of its serious departures from the teachings of historic Christianity regarding the Person and Work of its Divine Founder. It is probable that Gladstone took the book too seriously, unless it be regarded as a straw indicating the direction of the wind. It was an evidence that the tide had begun to run towards that humanism which has/

has elicited so much interest in the present century. While that is true, there is also some justification for a facetious comment made by Mr E.F. Benson. "Whatever came within the wide circle of his interests was to be taken seriously, he pounced upon it, he pronounced upon it. He even took Robert Elsmere seriously, and devoted to its discussion a solid article in "The Nineteenth Century" in which he examined it as if it had been a heretical document of the Early Church." (As We Were. p.112).

Mrs Ward's aim in "Robert Elsmere" is to suggest a new version of Christianity in which its moral teaching is retained, while the supernatural element disappears. All dogma is thus discarded, and the gospel of Christ emerges as an incomparable code of ethics. In other words, the implications of "Ecce Homo" are here pushed to their logical conclusions. The novel traces the stages by which its hero reached this position. The chief consideration which weighed with him in reaching that decision was the intrinsic incredibility of the miraculous. Gladstone's reply to that objection, with which he deals at greater length in one of the Butler essays, is to the effect that the possibility and credibility of miracles cannot be satisfactorily settled until both science and philosophy have ascertained the precise limits beyond which the established order of nature cannot be modified by what Gladstone calls "the extraneous force of will." He lays stress on the fact that men can interfere with natural law and order to a surprising/

surprising degree. If the creature can thus manipulate the forces of nature that they become the servants of his will, how much more may we not believe that the Creator possesses the same power in a proportionably larger measure. In other words, it is but a new version of the familiar argument that, if we believe in God, we must also believe in such signs and wonders as are, on the one hand, well authenticated, and, on the other, are capable only of a supernatural explanation. Gladstone has a wonderful way of getting at the heart of things, a talent which stood him in splendid stead as a statesman.

Having thus disposed of the problem offered by the miraculous element in the Four Gospels, he proceeds to deal with the bare and bald Theism which the story proposes to substitute for the doctrines of historic Christianity. Such a change inevitably involves the denial of Our Lord's Divinity. Of that Gladstone writes, "A Christianity without Christ is no Christianity; and a Christ not divine is one other than the Christ on whom the souls of Christians have habitually fed." (Later Gleanings. p.103). That is well put. By its very name Christianity proclaims that Christ is God, the proper object of such reverence and honour and praise as properly belongs to the Deity alone. It may seem to be uncharitable to say so but a religion which reduces Christianity to the level of a man of like passions with ourselves is simply a different religion, resembling Christianity in many particulars, but separated from it by as great a gulf as Judaism than which there are few finer examples of a faith whose beall and endall is ethical monotheism.

surprising degree. If the creature can thus manipulate the forces of nature that they become the servants of his will, how much more may we not believe that the Creator possesses the same power in a proportionably larger measure. In other words, it is but a new version of the familiar argument that, if we believe in God, we must also believe in such signs and wonders as are, on the one hand, well authenticated, and, on the other, are capable only of a supernatural explanation. Gladstone has a wonderful way of getting at the heart of things, a talent which stood him in splendid stead as a statesman.

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Mrs Ward declares herself in the book to be an enthusiastic exponent of the Christian Ethic, arguing that its value and validity are quite independent of Christian Dogmatic. To that contention with its remarkably modern flavour, Gladstone rejoins that the profoundest problem of the human race in the moral and religious spheres alike is not to know what to do, but how to do it. He appropriately calls attention to the fact that the Incarnation took place at an hour in the world's history when men had come to an end of themselves in the spiritual sphere.

On that hard Roman world, disgust
 And secret loathing fell;
 Deep weariness and sated lust
 Made human life a hell.

As always man's extremity proved to be God's opportunity. In the Person and Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, perfect means were provided whereby sinful man could achieve the impossible by fulfilling his chief end in glorifying God and enjoying Him for ever. That was the cardinal defect in Mrs Ward's teaching. It was an example of ethic without dynamic. Gladstone knew both in theory and practice that God has provided a more excellent plan of salvation in Jesus Christ Our Lord than works of righteousness.

Gladstone had sent this article to Lord Acton by whose judgment he set great store. Morley makes this interesting comment on Acton's replies to Gladstone's letters on the subject. The correspondence of the great Cambridge historian has/

has not yet been published, and consequently Morley's observations have no greater authority than surmise. He writes in this fashion "Acton's letters in reply may have convinced Mr Gladstone that there were depths in this supreme controversy that he had hardly sounded; and adversaries that he might have mocked from a professor of the school or schools of unbelief, he could not in his inner mind make light of, when coming from the pen of a catholic believer. Before and after the article on Robert Elsmere appeared, Acton, the student, with his vast historic knowledge and his deep penetrating gaze, warned the impassioned critic of some historic point overstated or understated, some dangerous breach left all unguarded, some lack of nicety in definition." (III. p.360). These comments must be read with the thought continually kept in mind that Morley was an atheist. While his references to Gladstone's piety are above all reproach, he was still a stranger and an alien in the things of God.

Turning from the Person of Our Lord to His redeeming work, Gladstone's convictions on the subject, apart from scattered references, may be found in an essay, entitled "The True and False Conceptions of the Atonement", and in some notes on "The Mediation of Christ." The former was a review of Mrs Annie Besant's Autobiography. The latter was a brief dissertation written as early as 1830 in an interleaved copy of Butler's Analogy, and incorporated in the volume of Butler Studies. In the main, Gladstone's beliefs are those usually associated with the evangelical school. The death of Christ is a propitiation for the sin/

sin of the whole world. There is no hint which might warrant the inference that he had any sympathy with those theories of the Atonement which would reduce the Cross to a sublime instance of martyrdom, the utmost for the highest, par excellence. Such a spectacle cannot but move men to affectionate surrender and allegiance so that they are reconciled to God in Christ. In contrast Gladstone believes with all his mighty heart and mind that the Death of Christ is primarily a propitiation, whatever there may be said regarding its significance as a pattern of all virtue.

But our present concern is with his reactions to Mrs Besant's confession of faith, in particular with her strictures on the Anselmic interpretation of Our Lord's death as a grave reflection on the wisdom and justice of God. She argues that it is intolerable to believe that the just should suffer for the unjust. That leads Gladstone into a train of reasoning, characteristic in its excess of subtlety, to the effect that pain is not an evil in itself and by itself, since it never fails to bring a great harvest of blessings and blessedness to the soul which is rightly exercised by it. The popular misconception that pain is inherently evil has arisen from its intimate association with sin. In the case of Our Lord, the Incarnation may fairly be described as a period of probation and progression so that there can be no objection to describing Him as a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. In support of that contention, he cites such passages as Luke II, 52, XIII, 32; Phils. II, 8-9; Hebs. V,

8-9. He makes it abundantly plain that these references deal not with Our Lord's essential nature as sinless and, therefore, as requiring no purification, but with His qualification and preparation for His ministry as the Saviour of the world. It was thus that He sanctified Himself for the salvation of sinners. In the light of such arguments, there seems to be no insuperable injustice in the fact that Our Lord was the greatest sufferer that ever lived.

As for the rationale of His sufferings, Gladstone finds its secret in that pervasive law of life that vicarious suffering is the price which must be made for so much that is really worth having. The Atonement is thus the supreme illustration of the principle that the man, who would essay to save others, cannot save himself. Through Our Lord's poverty the race has been enriched with all the Divine riches of grace and truth. By one man's obedience many are made righteous. Christ became sin that sinners might become the righteousness of God in Him. "So that I trust we may glory in the Cross of Christ, unmolested by any notion that there is the smallest presumption or symptom of injustice connected with that wondrous sacrifice. In this case there is nothing to contradict our notions of justice, however much there may be to transcend them. There is a mystery, deep hid in the bosom of God, but it is a mystery of love, of love eternal, of love unbounded, and love alone." (Subsidiary Studies. p. 332). Gladstone is the only English Premier who ever wrote in that strain. We shall never see his like again.

Gladstone's views on soteriology, subjective as well as objective/

objective, offer some points of special interest. One is concerned with the exact range of the boons and blessings gained for man by Christ through His death on the cross. To appreciate Gladstone's position which tends as usual to excessive refinement, it is necessary to understand the distinction which he draws between corrective and vindictive justice. Taking the latter first, he describes the guilt and mental misery which sin never fails to entail as vindictive or retributive results. On the other hand, he regards as corrective and disciplinary such fruits of wickedness as the shameful recollections which it implants in the mind and memory, and the power which it wields as the result of repeated indulgence. In short, the guilt of sin is vindictive justice in operation, and its power corrective justice. The distinction is surely a false one, and superficial at that. The consequences of moral evil which are really worthy to be regarded as vindictive must be sought in the world to come, when reformation becomes impossible. All else which follows in its train may be treated as corrective like physical pain which warns us that we have transgressed the laws of Nature. It was, however, impossible for Gladstone to accept such a view since he was inflexibly opposed to the natural immortality of the soul, or, for that matter, to conditional immortality as well. That phase of his theological opinions will call for detailed discussion at a later stage. For the present, it will suffice to say that his attitude towards the fate of the impenitent in the world to be was one of reverent agnosticism.

In dealing with corrective justice, he makes a very fine point/

point by insisting on the truth, so often overlooked, and so often illustrated in daily life, that the remission of sins does not necessarily abrogate their baneful consequences. "Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God, Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their doings. (Ps. XCIX, 8. R.V.). In referring to this sweet and stern subject Gladstone has this admirable sentence. "All these consequences of sin, and all the struggles with them, if bitter in their first inception, have an after-sweetness, which effectually soothes and reconciles, and engenders not only a contentment due to resignation and submission, but a kind of actual joy in salutary pain; supremely described by the genius which has presented to us the 'Dream of Gerontius'." (Later Gleanings. p.329). The Psalmist said the same thing a thousand times better, and with wonderful brevity. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." (Ps. CXIX, 71).

Another conspicuous feature of Gladstone's discussion on the Atonement is his somewhat unusual attitude to the doctrine of justification by faith, or as Mrs Besant designates it "vicarious righteousness". She had been reared in an evangelical household, and she was perfectly familiar with all the doctrines of grace as they would have been called in such a milieu. Gladstone strives to equate the truth of imputed righteousness with the forgiveness of sins. He will allow that acceptance with God is included, but he is not prepared to admit that Christ is made unto the believer righteousness in the sense associated with the Reformers' exposition of this doctrine. Indeed he goes the/

the length of suggesting in a letter to Manning that the word might well be forgotten. (Lathbury . "Gladstone's Letters on Church and Religion." l. p. 235). He is disposed to explain justification in the sense suggested by its literal meaning. It primarily signifies "making just." In short, it is hard to see how he would distinguish justification and sanctification. Roman Catholic theologians amalgamate the two, and it may be that Gladstone's sacerdotal sympathies inclined his mind in that direction.

But it is far from easy to grasp clearly what Gladstone exactly meant by justification. His references are somewhat sporadic, and being neither a very coherent nor consistent thinker, his exact position is apt to be somewhat indeterminate. There is, for example, a very strong passage in one of his essays dealing with "The Courses of Religious Thought" (Gleanings 3. p.116). Writing of the evangelical party in the Church of England, he thus delivers himself, "In respect of this last (justification of faith), it has often ascribed to faith the character and efficacy of a moral work; seemingly not even aware that it was thereby cutting from beneath its feet the famous *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae*. It has a logical difficulty in ridding itself of such excrescences; seeing that the excrescence and that to which it clings grow out of one and the same soil, as they are received upon one and the same warrant, whether it be that of a favourite religious teacher, or a personal illumination. "The only possible inference from these words/

words is that Gladstone did not regard the doctrine of justification by faith as being taught in the New Testament, especially in the Pauline Epistles. That is a strange remark to make of a man who was such a persistent student of the Bible, but no other explanation can be found for the teaching of the Thirty-Nine Articles on the subject leaves no room for dubiety. There only remains one theory which may relieve the difficulty. In his edition of Butler's Works (2. p. 434), Gladstone prints the report of a conversation between the Bishop and John Wesley. In its course Butler suggests that saving faith must be meritorious. Wesley refutes that error, and Butler seems to acknowledge that there had been some misunderstanding. It may well be that Butler's criticism had made a deep impression on Gladstone for he regarded all that the former wrote with almost superstitious veneration.

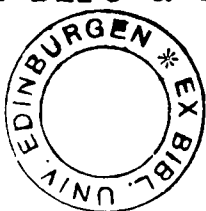
Yet another observation to be made on Gladstone's views of the Atonement is that he insists with great earnestness that sins are freely pardoned by God in Christ only on condition that men walk in newness of life and sin no more. Men must not continue in sin that grace may abound. Gladstone had no use for antinomianism of that type as became such a champion of righteousness and undoubtedly was. In his discussion of this truth is clear and more. It will be found that he uses language which is too easily to the doctrine that amendment of life is a condition to amend, becomes almost a condition of Divine pardon. "There are

are modes of presenting the doctrine of pardon according to which it effects an absolution, such that, when it has been obtained, we have only to enjoy it, and suffer it to work out its results, every other requisite of spiritual progress follows spontaneously. But if this be a right conception of it, the task of harmonizing such a theory with the ordinary laws which govern our moral nature becomes far from an easy one." (Later Gleanings, p.332). It may be that the doctrine of regeneration is in question here, or it may be that he is reiterating Paul's teaching when he bids believers to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phils. II. 12). There is a certain vagueness about some of Gladstone's statements which makes it hard to pin him down to some definite view. It is not easy to take any other view but that he was absolutely loyal to the gospel of grace when we find him remarking that, if sinners be forgiven of God on their merits, they would be their own redeemers, not the redeemed of Christ (Ibid p.324). It is probable that he only wished to call attention to that great truth which is so clearly taught in the Epistle of James that faith without works is dead, being alone (II. 14-26). The acid test of faith must ever be faithfulness. Judged by that standard, Gladstone himself emerges as a veritable hero of faith.

CHAPTER VI.

Gladstone was a greater ecclesiastic than a theologian, if measured by the amount which he wrote on the subject, and also by the honour in which he was held as a great churchman. Indeed it may be said that his influence on the Church of England was as great as that which he exercised on England itself, largely due to efforts on behalf of the High Church Movement. "Here was the first man in England holding the very opinions which they had been taught to regard as a strange compound of intellectual folly and moral wickedness. In many cases they had been taught to regard him as a political oracle, and it was difficult to believe that this oracle became an imbecile or an impostor the moment he touched Religion. "So writes Mr D.C. Lathbury in his book on Gladstone as a leader of the Church with reference to many humbler men who were halting between two opinions, unsatisfied with evangelicalism, and uneasy regarding ritualism (p. IX). In these circumstances no survey of Gladstone's theology could be complete without some reference to his churchmanship, especially in view of the fact that two of his earliest publications were concerned with this subject.

To understand and appreciate Gladstone's beliefs with reference to the character and vocation of the Christian Church, it is needful to remark again on the fact that, although his upbringing was evangelical, both in doctrine and ecclesiastical matters, he became early in life a supporter of the Oxford Movement/



Movement whose centre and soul was his friend, John Henry Newman. There is a striking paragraph, quoted by Morley (I, p.158), in which Gladstone defines the various doctrines of the church with a clearness and compactness which defies summary. "To the erastian lawyer the church was an institution erected on principles of political expediency by act of parliament. To the school of Whately and Arnold it was a corporation of divine origin, devised to strengthen men in their struggle for goodness and holiness by the association and mutual help of fellow-believers. To the evangelical it was hardly more than a collection of congregations commended in the Bible for the diffusion of knowledge and the right interpretation of the Scriptures, the commemoration of gospel events, and the linking of gospel truths to a well-ordered life. To the high anglican as to the Roman Catholic, the church was something very different from this; not a fabric reared by man, nor in truth any mechanical fabric at all, but a mystically appointed channel of salvation, an indispensable element in the relation between the soul of man and its Creator. To be a member of it was not to join an external association, but to become an inward partaker in ineffable and mysterious graces to which no other access lay open. Such was the Church Catholic and Apostolic and set up from the beginning, and of this immense mystery, of this saving agency, of this incommensurable spiritual force, the established Church of England was the local presence and organ." The Oxford Movement was tantamount to the revival of the doctrine defined in the closing sentences of the preceding extract.

Gladstone's own adoption of such views was characterised
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by a suddenness and thoroughness which contrasted strangely with his habitual caution and fundamental conservatism. It was as deep and drastic as some cases of conversion during a revival of evangelical religion. This change took place in 1832 during six months which he spent in Italy just after he left Oxford. He was then twenty-three years of age. It was in the course of a visit to Naples, just after he had felt for the first time "the atmosphere of gorgeous Rome" that this revolution in his religious convictions took place.

His own account of this spiritual experience is so fine that it must be quoted in full. (Morley I. p.87). "One Sunday (May 13) something, I know not what, set me on examining the occasional offices of the church in the prayer book. They made a strong impression on me on that very day, and the impression has never been effaced. I had previously taken a great deal of teaching direct from the Bible, as best I could, but now the figure of the Church arose before me as a teacher too, and I gradually found in how incomplete and fragmentary a manner I had drawn divine truth from the sacred volume, as indeed I had almost missed in the thirty-nine articles something which ought to have taught me better. Such, for I believe that I have given the fact as it occurred, in its silence and its solitude, was my first introduction to the august conception of the Church of Christ. It presented to me Christianity under an aspect in which I had not yet known it; its ministry of symbols, its channels of grace, its unending line of teachers joining from the

the Head: a sublime construction based throughout upon historic fact, uplifting the idea of the community in which we live, and of the access which it enjoys through the new and living way to the presence of the Most High. From this time I began to feel my way by degrees into or towards a true notion of the Church. It became a definite and organised idea, when at the suggestion of James Hope, I read the just published and remarkable work of Palmer. But the charm of freshness lay upon that first disclosure of 1832."

This radical change in Gladstone's ecclesiastical sympathies soon bore fruit in two books. In December, 1838, there appeared the once famous work, "The State in its relations with the Church." When it was first published, it enjoyed great popularity, passing through no fewer than four editions. Gladstone was inspired to write it by a series of lectures on the same subject, delivered by Dr Chalmers in the Hanover Square Rooms to large and influential audiences. He disagreed with Chalmers whom he greatly admired, having risked an academic penalty when he was an undergraduate at Oxford by going with a friend to hear the great Scots divine in the Baptist Chapel at Oxford. Gladstone accordingly embodied his own reflections on the question in the book just mentioned. It is now remembered best by the slashing essay which Macaulay contributed to "The Edinburgh Review".

The general argument of the book is that the state has a conscience. That imposes the duty of fostering and upholding by every means in its power that type of religion which it believes to/

to be true and righteous altogether. That doctrine is applied to the case of England, and the conclusion is reached that the Anglican Church, as by law established, is entitled to the full support of the state. This involved not merely assistance of every description but the repression of other religious sects. Such a political philosophy would have been eminently adequate and appropriate in the Middle Ages when the Roman Church reigned without a rival worthy of mention, but it was hopelessly incongruous at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Gladstone was not slow to perceive that flaw in his reasoning, and he withdrew completely from the position which he had defended with such singleminded enthusiasm.

The latter is eloquently illustrated by his action in resigning office rather than agree to the granting of a state subsidy to Maynooth College, the famous Irish seminary for the training of priests. "During the ten years of Whig ascendancy his heart was more in Oxford than in Westminster, and in 1838 he published his first book, *The Church Considered in its Relations with the State*, the book that led Macaulay to describe the author as the 'last hope of the stern unbending Tories' and to enquire mockingly, 'Why not roast Dissenters in front of slow fires?' This book is interesting as another proof of the author's willingness to 'go all lengths', even to suggesting that the Church of England is alone the repository of truth and should force everyone into its mould. We must remember this first work, which was to lead to the author's first resignation."

(Francis/

(Francis Birrell. Gladstone. p.19).

Two years later Gladstone published another volume on a cognate subject, entitled "Church Principles Considered in their Results" (1840). He was then Member of Parliament for Newark, and the writing of the book reveals the interest to which a good deal of his leisure was devoted. It had but a limited circulation. Macaulay was desirous of ^{vi}renewing it, but on examining its contents he gave up the project on the grounds that it savoured too much of theology. It is frankly a manifesto in defence and in commendation of the High Church Party in matters of ecclesiastical interest. It deals in considerable detail with such important planks in their doctrinal platform as the visible church, the supremacy of the sacraments, and the apostolic succession. Its main interest lies in the attempt which its author makes to justify sacerdotalism, not on Biblical, or historical, or theological grounds, so much as on pragmatic considerations.

Indeed the title is a clear clue to the contents of the book. It is a discussion of the teaching popularised by the Oxford Movement from the standpoint of its outworking in actual practice rather than from that of intrinsic truth. There is, of course, no suggestion of defending sacerdotal teaching merely on the grounds of expediency. Gladstone was absolutely convinced by the arguments on which the whole position rests. He is merely adding to the outworks which defend the position. In contrast to the standpoint of his earlier book, Gladstone is at pains to prove that his theories do not involve hardship to other/

other religious bodies. He was ever the most charitable and tolerant of men, although his Protestant polemics, as they are contained in certain pamphlets from his pen, might convey a different impression. The reason for their vigour which verges occasionally on virulence lies in the political, rather than in the religious issues involved. Gladstone claimed that he perceived in certain pronouncements by the Vatican a menace to civil and religious freedom. The effect was like that of the proverbial red rag to a bull. It roused into opposition his combative genius.

An outline of the various contentions, which are advanced in "Church Principles", will serve as a rapid survey of Gladstone's main positions with regard to the church and its ministries. It is a large volume, running to more than five hundred pages, and comprising seven chapters. He begins by enlarging on one of his favourite doctrines that religion is the keystone of human history. Its outward and obvious influence is apt to ebb and flow, although it ever remains as a secret spring of living water to refresh and revive the spirit of man. The ground to be covered is then demarcated, while the truly catholic atmosphere of its pages is expressed in the quotation of a fine saying from Augustine. "Magistrum unum omnes habemus, et in una schola condiscipuli sumus."

The second chapter is occupied with preparatory considerations for the exposition of his distinctive churchmanship by skilful arguments that the blessings of the gospel are not granted solely on conditions of intellectual assent. They transcend/

transcend reason although they do not oppose it like the winds of God which blow where they list. He has no difficulty in making out a good case for that proposition, laying great stress on the profound argument that unaided reason cannot minister to a mind diseased either through sin or sorrow. The way is thus opened for an exposition of the gospel in which the sacraments and sacramental grace are very prominent. It should be carefully noted that the book has but little to say with regard to the teaching of the New Testament, the final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice. In justice to him, let it be said that he definitely acknowledges that the Bible must be supreme, but he declines to dismiss that aspect of his subject since it is properly the sphere of the theologian.

The arguments for a visible church, constituting indeed and in truth the continuation of the Incarnation, are then marshalled. He maintains that the visible church is the outward expression of inward piety, its inevitable counterpart. It ought to be honoured as the mystical body of Christ, a spiritual society ever testifying to the unseen and the eternal. He appeals to the Bible in support of that doctrine, and defends the latter from aspersions on the score that it has fallen into disrepute owing to its being confused and confounded with the characteristic principles of Romanism. The case is argued with needless thoroughness. Gladstone cannot rest until he has demolished every objection, although the suspicion is often left in the reader's mind here and elsewhere that the weightier matters of the law have been overlooked by this intellectual Pharisee.

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In dealing with the doctrine of the sacraments to which his fourth chapter is devoted, Gladstone defends the ritualistic theology. He asserts that these have objective efficacy, stopping short of the position that they do good to the soul of man *ex opere operato*. This interpretation is supported by appeals to such considerations as the union of body and soul. In short, he reasons that mind is rarely found except in the closest association and conjunction with matter, as far as human observation and experience can carry us. The advantages of such a doctrine he finds in the protection which it affords the sacraments from dangers arising out of fanaticism, despondency, and unbelief, prevailing in the minds and hearts of worshippers. Such sacramentarianism implies a succession of ministers qualified to act accordingly and appropriately. That is secured in turn by Our Lord's promise that He would ever be with His people (Matt: XXVIII. 20).

The next chapter is devoted to the claims of the Church of England to conform to the ideal just outlined. The final chapter deals with three criticisms which may be made on the position defended in the book. One is that such teaching has Roman Catholic affinities. A second is that it involves the excommunication of all Dissenters, while the third is that the Anglican Communion itself is deeply divided. Gladstone was always ready to find a reply to any stricture that was ever devised, and this gift seems to have been as vigorous at the end as at the beginning of his career. The book concludes with
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a brief analysis of three factors which he regards as decisive for the spiritual prosperity of the church. These are permanence of faith, comprehensiveness of communion, and liberty of thoughts. Gladstone claimed that all three had free course in the Church of England, and were glorified.

The discussion of these contentions hardly falls within the scope of the present subject, and they may be left to speak for themselves. An appendix may however be added in the shape of two references to Gladstone's views on ecclesiastical matters. Mr D.C. Lathbury writes in this strain. "Few things in Mr Gladstone are more remarkable than the combination of profound belief in Eucharistic doctrine with entire indifference to the ceremonial modes in which belief takes shape." (Letters on Church and Religion of W.E. Gladstone. I. p.375). In the same vein Gladstone himself writes (Ibid p.400). "The courts might forbid the clergy to wear the priest's dress. They did not forbid them to claim the priest's character or to exercise the priest's function." Surely he is not far from that great New Testament doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers.

CHAPTER VII.

Gladstone commenced the study of Bishop Butler's works when he was an undergraduate at Oxford. At the beginning of last century these formed part of the prescribed reading in the Honours School. This "dry and bracing philosophy", as Mr Herbert Paul describes it in his Life of Gladstone, seems to have made a tremendous impression on the future statesman so that he remained to the end of his days a devoted disciple of the great eighteenth century apologist and moralist. Indeed so great was his devotion to Butler that the latter has been characterised as his idol. The results of study and admiration so thorough and so prolonged, are of such a kind that they constitute a special subject by themselves, in view of the fact that Butler's influence can be traced in all kinds of ways in Gladstone's mentality. There is, of course, no need to dwell on the greatness of Butler. His writings will endure as long as philosophical theology engages the attention of men's minds, and yet it must be said that the fascination which he exercised over such a man as Gladstone is not the least impressive of his claims to immortality. When the latter had passed his eightieth year, he accounted it a labour of love to prepare an edition of his master's writings whose slender compass contrasts so strangely with the oceanic output of his follower. As Sir James Fitzjames Stephen remarks, "It may be doubted whether any writer within the last century has made such a reputation with so few pages as Bishop Butler." (*Horae Sabbaticae*. II./

II. p.280). The comparatively limited nature of Butler's publications made it possible for his aged disciple to prepare an elaborate edition of the Analogy and Sermons. Their text is arranged in convenient paragraphs. Each of these is provided with a terse but adequate summary of the argument which were intended to aid the average reader in threading his way through the labyrinth of Butler's pages. Explanatory foot-notes are added in great abundance as far as the Analogy is concerned and more rarely in the Sermons. An index, unusually comprehensive and complete, adds to the value of the edition which was published in two volumes in 1896. Later in the same year Gladstone issued a third book entitled. "Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler." This constitutes Gladstone's largest and weightiest contribution to theological thought. Indeed it may be said that all that is of real interest and importance as throwing light on Gladstone's theology as far as it was influenced by Butler can be found in the essays contained in the volume of "Subsidiary Studies".

These papers are classified in two sections of which the earlier is devoted to a series of discussions dealing with various phases of Butler's teaching, and the latter to subjects suggested by Butler's arguments, examples being determinism, miracles, and, above all, the immortality of the soul. A considerable fraction of the material, embodied in the earlier part, had previously appeared as articles in "Good Words", and "The Nineteenth Century". The chapters in the latter part of the/

the book were new with two exceptions. One was a sheaf of notes on the Mediation of Christ which he had written in early life in an interleaved copy of Butler. The other was a characteristic article for "The Nineteenth Century", dealing with Butler's favourite principle that probability is the guide of life. It appeared in the issue of March, 1879.

While our subject is Gladstone's reactions to Butler, and not Butler himself, it is necessary that a brief reference be made to the latter. Writing of him about a century after his death, Newman pronounced him to be "the greatest name in the Anglican Church". Yet his career was so uneventful that Walter Bagehot, in his essay on Butler, succeeds in summarizing it in a single sentence. He was born in 1692 at Wantage in Berkshire, the son of respectable Presbyterian parents. Early in life he joined the Anglican Communion, and, after reading for holy orders at Oriel College, Oxford, destined to be famous for its connection with Newman and the Oxford Movement, he became successively Preacher at the Rolls Chapel, Bishop of Bristol, Dean of St Paul's, and Bishop of Durham. It is significant to recall in that connection that Gladstone himself sprung from Presbyterian stock, his father, Sir John Gladstone, having begun his career as a member of that church. Butler died in 1752 at the age of sixty, leaving a great reputation for his combination of personal sanctity and penetrating scholarship.

His age was one of prevailing irreligion, and he shares with his contemporary, John Wesley, from whom he differed as the/

the poles apart, the distinction of having helped to stem this baleful tide, and to turn the current of public opinion towards revealed religion. What Wesley did for the masses, Butler accomplished for the culture and scholarship of that day. The former dealt with the rampant sin and godlessness of that period, the latter with the theological and philosophical expression of this irreligious tendency in the prevalence of Deism. Butler's polemics are really directed towards the doctrines of such writers as Toland, Tindal, and Collins, representative names amongst contemporary Deists.

Butler's position is defined and defended in his *Analogy*. Indeed it can hardly be stated more succinctly than in the full title of that famous work, "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature." His opponents and himself both conceded that God exists, but they differed in the fact that there was no need for revelation. For the Deists of that day, unaided reason was quite capable of deriving all the information required for religion from the study of phenomena. They seemed to find no problems in things as they are or seem to be. Everything is bright and beautiful. Butler's reply is that Nature is as prolific in mysteries and stones of stumbling as revelation so that the Deist was inconsistent with himself in rejecting revelation as wholly superfluous. Logically the latter ought to renounce religion of any kind, natural or revealed, for both are encumbered with the same difficulties. These are of such a kind that a satisfactory solution/

solution can never be obtained but that need not prevent men from cultivating religion, and, more especially, discharging its moral obligations since probability is the very guide of life. In every aspect of human experience men stop short of full and final demonstration, and yet they are prepared to take action. That must be true of religion and ethics as well. They must do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God, even although they cannot attain to absolute certitude on the themes with which religion deals.

In point of fact, Butler was more of a moralist than a theologian. The keystone of his position is the supremacy of conscience. In his Sermons he argues for it in the realm of conduct, and in his Analogy in that of religion. Butler's writings are thus manifestoes in defence of the proposition that duty, that stern daughter of God, is the beginning and end of human life, always interpreted as the mind and will of God. In private life, Butler was the most conscientious of men, especially in financial matters, that sharp test of morality. In that respect, Gladstone closely resembled him. When he wrote once that "the moral crisis is what reaches furthest and matters most," he echoes the beliefs of Bishop Butler. (Morley II. p.508)

CHAPTER VIII.

In a summary of Gladstone's researches and reflections in connection with Butler's work, it is best to concentrate attention on the essays contained in the Subsidiary Studies. That is no disparagement of the notes and comments which appear in his edition of the Analogy and Sermons, but all that it is of real usefulness in elucidating Gladstone's views can be found in the Butler Studies. As it so happens, the treatment of the Sermons is almost wholly confined to the analysis of the text. While there are but few references to them in the book about to be considered, its main subject is the Analogy. It is a matter of common observation that men often have some favourite book which may be described as their secular Scriptures. For one it is Shakespeare, for another "The Pilgrim's Progress", for Dr Benjamin Jowett of Balliol Boswell's Johnson, for Gladstone Butler's Analogy. That explains why it receives so much attention in these Butler Studies.

They open appropriately with an appreciation of Butler's method. "In offering to the world essays which are meant to be supplementary to the works of Butler, I assign the foremost place to the consideration of his method, for the following reason. While maintaining the direct value of the argument of his largest work, the Analogy, to be unabated, I hold that the value of his method is greater still" (Subsidiary Studies p.1). There is a wealth of wisdom in that observation. If a personal reminiscence may be permitted, I recall a remark of the late Professor James Seth/

Seth who occupied the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University so long and so honourably. Lecturing on a passage in Aristotle's Ethics, he observed in an aside that he had long since forgotten all the mathematics which he had ever learned, but he hoped that the mathematical method he would ever remember and employ to profit "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cors. III. 6.R.V.)

In the course of the chapter Gladstone refers to various aspects of Butler's method. The first that calls for mention is his exclusive reliance on induction in reaching his characteristic conclusions. In that respect, he differed in toto from the Deists. They were too prone to operate with pre-conceived ideas as to God and His dealings with the sons of men as well as with the works of His hands. The stern realism of Butler contrasted strangely with their radiant optimism. He warns the reader against contemplating things otherwise than as they are. In one of the aphorisms which abound in his pages he roundly asserts that things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be. He confines himself rigidly to the evidence furnished by man's experience and by the testimony of the Bible, and, in dealing with these, he seeks to accept them as they are and not as they ought to be, nor as they might be desired. He is profoundly impressed with man's ignorance and circumscription in dealing with the deep things of God. To such an extent is that the case that he will weave no theories in anticipation. Such a line of approach is commonplace at the present day but it was decidedly novel in Butler's age.

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Dr Chalmers rightly observes that, just as Bacon was the pioneer of the inductive method in science, Butler holds a similar position in theology.

Gladstone also calls attention to the controversial note which is never far absent from Butler's pages, although he scarcely refers to his opponents by name. In that respect the disciple resembled his master. Lord Bryce has remarked with reference to Gladstone's theological writings that they are almost all apologetic in character. Butler's fairness in controversy is always apparent, and Gladstone rightly commends him on that score. He also points out that Butler dwells so much on the faults and flaws of his contentions that he succeeds in understating his position.

Attention is further drawn to the complete absence of the characteristic technique of the theologian in the development of the arguments. Just as the dyer's hand is subdued to the substance in which it works, so the mind of the lawyer and the scientist and the professional practitioner in every other department of human affairs unconsciously acquires certain habits of mind which affect the final judgment. It is far otherwise with Butler. Gladstone writes of him, "He is the votary of truth and is bound to no other allegiance".

(Subsidiary Studies. p.3). That is not saying any more than the facts of the case warrant. Butler's singular impartiality is worthy of all praise.

But none of these features are so characteristic as Butler's habitual emphasis on the principle that, for finite intelligences/

intelligences, probability is the very guide of life in matters of faith and practice. By probability Butler means any demonstration which comes short of mathematical finality. The term is used to cover every grade of probability, ranging upwards to the strongest assurance and downwards to the merest presumption in favour of a certain course of thought or action. In the religious and moral sphere, Butler holds that probability constitutes a sufficient warrant for doing or believing. Let it be repeated that his motive was not speculative but practical. He cared as little for abstract truth as Gladstone did and as much for the promotion of probity which is saying a good deal. Butler's stress on the obligation created by probability was actuated solely by the desire to strengthen the moral imperative. Indeed when he contends that probability is the maximum to which the mind and heart of man can attain in religion and ethics, he is thinking rather of the minimum basis on which their demands and duties can rest. "It may be that, despite of all reasoning, there will be pain to many a pious mind in following, even under the guidance of Bishop Butler, the course of an argument which seems all along to grant it as possible, that the argument in favour of the truth of Divine Revelation may amount to no more than a qualified and dubious likelihood. But, as when the net of the fisherman is cast wide, its extremity must lie far from the hand that threw it, so this argument of probability aims at including within the allegiance of religion those who are remote from everything like a normal faith. It is no mere feat/

feat of logical arms; it is not done in vainglory nor is it an arbitrary and gratuitous experiment, nor one disparaging to the majesty and strength of the Gospel. The Apostle, full of the manifold gifts of the Spirit, and admitted already to the third heaven, condescended before the Athenians to the elementary process of arguing from natural evidences for the Providence of God. The Gospel alone can fit us to appreciate its own proofs in all their force." (Ibid p.363) That fine passage is an excerpt from a long essay on Butler's Doctrine of Probability which appeared in "The Nineteenth Century". Following Butler's own method, its paragraphs are numbered.

There is something singularly congenial to the modern mind in such teaching. More and more it is being maintained to-day that the Golden Rule cannot be proved outright like the Rule of Three, since mathematics and ethics belong to different departments of scientific knowledge, the former being descriptive and the latter normative. As far as theological science is concerned, may it not be argued that it includes both types. On the one hand, it is concerned with a series of historic facts, and on the other with their explanation and interpretation. To the authors of the Bible the two were so closely joined as to be inseparable. The facts led inevitably and inexorably to one evaluation of their significance. This procession of historical incidents culminates in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ whose scientific significance as a medical miracle makes one music with its ineffable meaning as the very signature of God. Nothing else could serve as a foundation for religion and morals/

morals in view of the issues which hinge upon them. It has been well said that the glorious company of martyrs did not lay down their lives for presumptions and probabilities, no matter how strong. They endured the loss of all things including life itself because they knew Whom they had believed, and were persuaded that He was able to keep that which they had committed unto Him against that day. That was Gladstone's own practice. He was untroubled by doubts or fear. It is remarkable to find that his admiration and affection for Butler were so great that he is thus led to all intents and purposes to deny himself in his defence of Butler's circumspection.

To return to the paper on Butler's methods, it abounds in suggestive touches, proving that the inner eye of the octogenarian statesman was not dim, nor his spiritual strength abated. For example, we find that Butler's argument for the moral constitution of the world so that virtue is rewarded and vice rebuked is used to strengthen the old argument for the Divine existence based on design. In summarising that line of reasoning, Gladstone adduces an illustration of its truth which must surely be unique, "the wonderful monetary system of civilized countries, which exhibits the balance of forces in a manner more curious and striking than any mere physical ponderation can do." (Ibid p.15) There have been few greater authorities on high finance than Gladstone, and that lends all the more weight to these words which trace the Divine wisdom in economical law which is as real and as rigid as natural or moral law.

Another/

Another instance of these illuminating suggestions, which, as it ought to be said again and again, reward the reader of Gladstone's verbose pages much more than the main argument, is found in his observation that, since the greater includes the less, the moral argument for Theism which is based on the existence of sanctions, also aids in establishing belief in the Divine Being. Evidence in favour of God's character is also evidence in favour of his existence. In that way, Butler's treatise acquires a new relevance for this present hour. Deism is discredited but atheism and agnosticism are always with us. In these circumstances, Butler's arguments may be regarded as a superstructure which presupposes a sufficient basis. Thus while Gladstone could never be described as a systematic thinker, since his genius was pre-eminently practical and opportunist, he has always something worth saying on almost any subject which he took up, and their name is legion for they were many. There were few flints from which that mentality "true as steel, pure as gold" could not strike a spark or two.

CHAPTER IX.

Gladstone excelled as a debater. His instinctive power of detecting the weaknesses in the position of an opponent, and attacking them with irresistible skill and strength amounted to genius. This logical acumen was allied to oratorical gifts of the first order so that he never appeared to better advantage than in the cut and thrust of debate. In these circumstances, one would expect him to shine in controversy of every kind. As far as theological disputation was concerned, he was badly handicapped by his inability to deal with abstract questions, since his mind was as simple and concrete as his language was subtle. Indeed the contrast between the simplicity of his thinking and the cloud of words in which it was enveloped arrests the student's attention on page after page of his theological papers.

These observations will be illustrated at many points as account is taken of Gladstone's comments on a group of literary men whom he describes as Butler's censors. It is worthy of note that none of these can be described as a theologian in the strict sense of the term any more than Gladstone himself. The list includes Walter Bagehot, Miss S.S. Hennell, Leslie Stephen, Matthew Arnold, F.D. Maurice, Goldwin Smith, and Mark Pattison. In some cases he deals in detail with the criticisms on Butler's conclusions. In others the contentions are dismissed in more summary fashion. They all appeared originally in "The Nineteenth Century"/

Century" for November and December, 1895.

Turning first to Walter Bagehot's discussion of Butler, Gladstone begins by replying to his strictures on the latter's diction. That may not have much bearing on theology but some of the points which Gladstone makes are interesting for their own sake. He frankly admits that Butler's style is hard to read but he will not allow that it is obscure. He observes that a page of Butler could not be re-written without impairing its value which seems to be nonsense. Of greater weight is a quotation from Bishop Steer, one of Butler's many students, that the latter's language resembles that of a legal document which is really a model of lucidity and precision, although it may seem on the surface to be little better than a tissue of vain repetitions.

Pursuing further these irrelevancies, some reference may be made to the comparison with Plato which Bagehot makes to Butler's disadvantage. This so impressed Gladstone that he devotes a whole chapter to its refutation. In place of admitting the immeasurable superiority of Plato to Butler, he finds the explanation of Bagehot's comment that Plato saw the truth while Butler groped after it in the subjects with which they had to deal. Plato concerns himself only with the things which are seen and temporal, while Butler may be said like Milton to justify the ways of God to men. For Gladstone that explains the difference. He seems to have forgotten that Plato is outshone by the New Testament in those very qualities in which Bagehot finds him to be so far ahead of Butler, and yet its subject is the hidden things of God. But for Gladstone Butler's
 Analogy/

Analogy had neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing.

This same chapter in which he strains every nerve to defend Butler from a criticism which was really a compliment, since he was thought worthy to be compared with Plato, is an astonishing one. It illustrates a curious tendency to which Gladstone was prone to give the rein to the merest fancies, and to treat them as worthy of serious consideration. He argues that the murkiness of Butler's pages in contrast to the clear sunshine of Plato is due to the increasing complexity and complication of the issues with which he had charged himself to deal. Thus he argues that vice of every kind had gone from bad to worse so that the moral turpitude of England in the eighteenth century exceeded that of Greece in Plato's day. In other respects unchanging problems of human experience had been intensified so that the ancients had no conception of the changes which had taken place since their age. The consequence is that Butler cannot deliver his soul with the same clearness and confidence as Plato and the classical philosophers. It is only necessary to remark in reply that such reasoning would invalidate the Bible as well.

The chief criticism of the Analogy, made by Bagehot, is that we should have expected revealed religion to have removed the problems left unsolved by natural religion, while Butler argues that the one is attended by the same difficulties and drawbacks as the other. "There is no doubt that this objection strikes at the very heart of the Analogy. If the objection stands, the treatise must fall." (Ibid p.24). Gladstone's main line/

line of reply is that Bagehot has failed to envisage the true aim of revelation. That is the conquest of sin, the supreme evil in human experience. "But the case of human nature is not a case of mere difficulty; it is a case of disease, and the mischief lies not in the darkness of the understanding, but in the perversion of the Will." (Ibid p.24). That is a true and faithful saying but it fails to cover all the ground. The gospel of Jesus Christ has unquestionably met the deepest need of man but that does not exhaust its beneficial effects. It has also disposed of the difficulties with which natural theology cannot successfully grapple. That is proved by the fact that the questions which so sorely vexed the minds and hearts of the Old Testament saints are settled for ever in the pages of the New. Revelation may not be free from difficulties for these, as Gladstone emphasises, are the gymnasia of faith, but these are negligible compared with those left unsolved by natural theology. In short, Butler errs by his habitual tendency to under-state his case. Gladstone either could not nor would not face up to that point. He was a past master in the art of evasion.

Miss S.S. Hennell refers to various objections to Butler's position with which Gladstone deals one by one, grinding them to powder as far as he could perceive. He begins by dealing with the observation of the younger Pitt that the Analogy suggested more doubts than it solved. He labours to prove that Pitt said no such thing. In a brief appendix to this volume of

of Butler Studies, he observes that there may be some justification for the observation, since Butler was a pioneer in boldly raising and facing the problem that revelation is not entirely free from handicaps and problems. He must have forgotten that the Analogy itself is avowedly based on a saying of Origen. "Hence, namely from analogical reasoning, Origen has with singular sagacity observed that 'he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him Who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of Nature.'" (Analogy, Gladstone's Edition. p.8).

The principal objection to the Analogy, which is raised by Miss Hennell, had already been emphasised by Dr James Martineau. It does not differ in essence from that advanced by Walter Bagehot. Butler argues that there are no problems in connection with revealed religion which do not also meet us in nature and natural religion. Martineau takes him at his word and calls special attention to the problem of pain. In view of its prevalence and the perplexity which it creates, Martineau reasons that a Deity who can continue to permit such a state of affairs is not a worthy object of religious veneration. "And so the question arises whether this victory is won in favour of revelation, or against Natural Religion. The argument is alike intelligible and forcible. If we represent disease and wrong as the characteristic features of creation, we clearly administer a terrible persuasive to Atheism." (Ibid p.34). It is interesting to note in that connection that James Mill always regarded the/

the reading of Butler's Analogy as a landmark on the road whereby he journeyed to infidelity. It is also worthy of note that Gladstone contested the truth of that statement.

In replying to this criticism of the Analogy, Gladstone does not appear to the best advantage. He admits the sorrow of the world and the problem which it raises. He explains the presence of misery amongst men by the fact of sin which is admittedly abnormal and subversive of God's gracious will and purpose. God has made provision for the conquest and removal of sin so that the mystery of suffering is not nearly so intractable, as it appeared at the first glance. In addition, he lays stress on such considerations as these which are put forward by Butler. "He urges that even here the bad man has small satisfaction in what he enjoys, and the good man large compensations for what he suffers; that in indirect form, - for example, in those of civil government - a law of right is to some extent proclaimed: that God even here and now takes part in the controversy, and proclaims himself to be on the side of virtue." (Ibid p.34). Such reasoning savours strongly of the Old Testament. Indeed the Analogy flavours more of the Old Testament than the New. Surely the answer to Martineau and Butler alike is furnished by such words as those of Paul. "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cors. IV, 17-18, R.V.), and/

and from the same source we learn that we are saved by hope.
(Roms. VIII, 24).

In parenthesis, it may be remarked that the best defence of Butler's argument seems to be supplied by Canon Scott Holland in his Romanes Lecture, entitled "The Optimism of Butler's Analogy." He takes the view that those problems and difficulties, connected with natural and revealed religion, on which Butler lays so much stress, are really stepping-stones to higher and better things, the shadows cast by the glory yet to be. They are discussed so fully by Butler that they may be seen to be but temporary. They are the schoolmasters to bring the soul of man to life more abundant. They are but rungs in the ladder set up between heaven and earth just as the drudgery of learning and practice is the precursor of complete mastery over a musical instrument with all the enlightenment and enlargement of soul which that brings. According to Dr Scott Holland, that is the gospel enshrined in the Analogy. Such an interpretation which is not quite conclusive would have won Gladstone's heart with its irrepressible cheerfulness and hopefulness. Morley closes his biography with a saying of the great statesman which is singularly apposite here. "Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling, not a mean and grovelling thing, that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny." (Morley III. p.552). An ideal, so noble and radiant, seems to have been compatible with the study of Butler for more than half a century.

CHAPTER X.

Leslie Stephen subjects Butler's arguments, not only in the Analogy but in the Sermons as well, to severe criticism in his book, "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century". Like all students of Butler, he has nothing but praise for his spirit, he refers to him as "the most patient, original, and candid of philosophical theologians." (Ibid p.45). He finds, however, much cause for unfavourable criticism in Butler's characteristic teaching. Gladstone traverses his comments, and replies to them with greater or less success. It will suffice if mention be made of one or two points which elucidate more clearly Gladstone's opinions on theological questions.

That curious defect in his mentality whereby he could persuade himself that the worse reason was the better is illustrated by his defence of Butler's methods of reasoning against a criticism which Leslie Stephen urges. "Mr Stephen states in an ingenious form an objection, which he applies first to the chapter on a Future Life, and then to the whole method. Butler, he says, avails himself of the absence of contradiction, and passes by the absence of confirmation; and so converts absolute ignorance into the likeness of some degree of positive knowledge." (Ibid p.46). The difficulty is clearly illustrated in the chapter on a Future Life. Butler argues that, since the human personality can survive the loss of bodily members, we are justified in inferring that its continued existence is also independent of the entire physical organism. Gladstone's answer to this objection/

objection seems to be rather defective. He maintains that Butler is merely rebutting an objection, and not proving a position. The Analogy is not concerned with the general question of the inevitable dependence of mind on matter for existence, but only with the relation between the human soul and the various parts of the body. Gladstone does not seem to perceive that a fallacy emerges here. It is true that conscious life perseveres despite the loss of various bodily organs but not of all, such as the heart or brain. The point at issue is merely Butler's method, and it may be left there. Gladstone concedes that, if Butler could be proved to have failed to explore his arguments to their logical conclusion, his authority would be seriously affected. It is unquestionable that Butler often conveys the impression that he has not pursued some of his contentions as far as he ought.

Turning from Leslie Stephen's comments on Butler's method of reasoning, some reference may be made to his discussion of determinism. "Mr Stephen does not omit to reproduce the charge that the real tendency of Butler's work is to unbelief; and this in a form apparently more crude and shallow, than that which it elsewhere assumes. 'No evasion can blind us to the true bearing of Butler's statements: God made men liable to sin. He placed them where they were certain to sin. He damns them everlastingly for sinning. This is the road by which the Analogy leads to Atheism.'" (Ibid. p.49). Gladstone rightly replies that similar structures may be made on the teaching of Holy Scripture, and, indeed, to Theism, in general. "Both the charge/

charge and the answer are recorded with childlike simplicity in the *Odyssey*. "Mortals" says Zeus, in the Olympian Assembly 'hold us responsible for the prevailing evils: but it is themselves, apart from destiny, who by their sins afflict themselves.'" (Ibid p.50). Surely when Leslie Stephen suggests that sin was inevitable in view of man's environment, he is misunderstanding the teaching of Scripture on the subject, whether that be regarded as conveyed in a literal or symbolic form. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed." (James I. 13-14. R.V.) Leslie Stephen's sympathies did not run very strongly in the direction of evangelical religion, and that goes some way to explain his position. In any case, the whole problem is an old one and incapable of solution, a summons to believe where we cannot prove. The real interest lies in the fact that Butler should again be charged with furnishing a pretext for atheism.

In Gladstone's pages Leslie Stephen's criticisms make but a poor showing. When the actual chapters in his book are read, a very different impression is made. Leslie Stephen attacks Butler on metaphysical grounds which do not concern us here since Gladstone declares that he does not propose to investigate them, for the sufficient reason that Butler does not occupy himself with such considerations. Indeed Gladstone scarcely does justice to Leslie Stephen despite the severity of his criticisms. He is too apt to overlook the fact that, while the *Analogy* is a triumphant/

triumphant refutation of Deism, it is deficient as a defence of Christianity.

That last observation leads naturally to the consideration of Matthew Arnold's estimate of Butler's theology. Writing of the Analogy, he observes. "It has the effect upon me, as I contemplate it, of a stately and more severe fortress, with thick and high walls, built of old to control the kingdom of evil; - but the gates are open, and the guards gone." (Last Essays, p.140). Gladstone's rejoinder is typical of the man. "The catapult has beaten on the walls of the fortress; it has stood the shock. The tempest has roared round the stately tree; and scarcely a leaf or twig has fallen to the ground." (Ibid p.71). These words are true but in a very different sense from that in which they were originally intended. Butler's Analogy is a theological classic but not so much on account of its substance as of its spirit. And what a spirit it is with all its earnestness, and reverence, and moderation, and humility. These things are too precious to be lost. They will last for ever.

To revert to Arnold's lectures on "Bishop Butler and the Zeitgeist" which he delivered in Edinburgh before the Philosophical Institution, and published in 1877. Gladstone follows him from point to point, and endeavours to refute every objection which he raises, but he fails to understand the point of view from which Butler's critics approach his work. It is sufficient that Butler be exposed to hostile criticism, and out flashes the falchion of the dear old crusader in his defence. There is no/

no point in reviewing all the details of the argumentation. It does not add anything appreciable to our knowledge of Gladstone's theology except with reference to Butler's Sermons.

Gladstone has little to say with regard to these, and that fact adds interest to what he writes in answer to Arnold's criticisms. The latter finds fault with Butler on the score of his definition of self-love and its connection with benevolence. Hobbes had resolved human conduct into a symphony of selfishness, varying through a thousand degrees of refinement and respectability. In tacit opposition to that theory Butler enthrones conscience as the final court of appeal in all moral problems, but he assigns a large place to what he describes as self-love as a master motive in conduct. That is due to his emphasis on the value of inductive methods. When he examines the constitution of man's soul as he actually finds it, and not as it may fondly be imagined to be, it is hopeless to deny the presence and power of self-love. With characteristic realism and frankness, Butler owns up to that fact, but subjects it in all things to the voice of conscience which is the voice of God in the soul of man.

By self-love Butler does not signify gross and culpable selfishness but that proper self-respect without which a man is worse than useless, salt which has lost his savour. It is the quality implicitly commended by Our Lord when He bade His followers to love their neighbours as themselves. In passing, one recalls that fine saying of John Newton, the hymn-writer and friend of Cowper, that God loves us more than we love ourselves. Such proper/

proper self-love is not incompatible with benevolence. As Gladstone well says, "And why should we set up a factitious opposition between benevolence and self-love? The duty of doing good to others, and the duty of doing good to ourselves, rest on the same authority, and form in harmony portions of the work which the Almighty has appointed for us to do during our sojourn upon earth." (Ibid p.65) It does, however, seem hard to find a place for self-sacrifice in such a system of morals. It is harder still to harmonize it with the teaching of the New Testament that denial of self is something unspeakably deeper and sweeter than self-denial. For Paul, that great example and exponent of New Testament ethics, to live was Christ. That is the true union of self-abnegation and self-realisation. The two planks, which formed the Cross of Christ, ran at right angles to each other.

Both Leslie Stephen and Matthew Arnold censure Butler on the score that he commends virtue because it is profitable both from a temporal and material standpoint. Well-doing on this theory is the secret of doing well. Honesty is the best policy. Gladstone has no difficulty in showing that Butler has been partially misunderstood. It is true that, like a son of the age in which he lived, he does the fullest justice to virtue as an incomparable asset in the business of this world but he would have cordially agreed with Archbishop Whateley when he observed that the man who is honest because it is the best policy is not honest. Butler would have been the first to admit that virtue is its own reward, and its greatest reward, and, in harmony/

harmony with Kant's ethical philosophy, that it must always be sought for its own sake, even as an end in itself, and never as a mere means. If there be any foundation for these comments of Leslie Stephen and Matthew Arnold on the utilitarian undercurrent of Butler's ethics, it must be sought in their ethos. The atmosphere of Butler's Sermons is utterly different from that of Wesley's Sermons, and, in the last analysis, it is the atmosphere which matters most. Butler seems to dwell in the twilight of the Old Testament, alike in ethics, as in faith.

Matthew Arnold's verdict on the Analogy is also qualified in various ways. Quoting Gladstone's summary (Ibid p.71), he thus remarks on Butler's position. "The Analogy is 'for all intents and purposes now a failure'. And we return from it to the 'boundless certitude and exhilaration of the Bible'; a certitude and exhilaration which do not restrain Mr Arnold from cutting out of the Scripture, as anthropomorphic and legendary, what nearly all its readers believe to be the heart and centre of its vital force." Again Gladstone's mental limitations obtrude themselves on the reader. He fails to appreciate the full force of Arnold's words. If the latter can still appreciate the sublime confidence and assurance of the New Testament despite his interpretation of its central and cardinal message as "anthropomorphic and legendary," how greatly does the weight of his views become increased by that very reservation. Gladstone failed to realise that Butler is so great that, after all deductions have been made for various causes, he remains as/

as a peerless figure in the history of Christian apologetic. Butler himself would probably have resented such fussy devotedness. He was only too well aware that in all things human imperfection abounds.

CHAPTER XI.

Having dealt in detail with the criticisms of Butler, made by Bagehot, Miss Hennell, Leslie Stephen, and Arnold, Gladstone turns to defend his hero from adverse comments which do not appear to be so grave. He refers to the difficulty raised by F.D. Maurice that Butler's doctrine of human nature is very different from that of Wesley. "The idea of human nature presented in the Sermons on Human Nature is according to him the exact opposite of that presented by Mr Wesley. It raises the question what provision does human nature supply as a remedy for the disorder admitted to have invaded it? Still more does the Analogy create a necessity for an answer to this question. Mr Maurice then imagines a challenge from John Wesley to Butler, on the ground that he, Wesley, held a supernatural operation to be necessary for the regeneration of man. Mr Maurice evidently believes that on this great subject the theologies of Wesley and Butler were at issue." (Ibid p.73).

Gladstone's reply is that Butler does full justice to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to the need for regeneration. But that is confined to one or two passages. It is only too easy to forget as one reads Butler's pages that man was shapen in iniquity. He conveys the impression that the human personality can still do what it ought. There is no hint of the struggles so powerfully described by Paul in Romans VII. "For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, I practice". (Romans VII. 19 R.V.). The true explanation may well be that Butler/

Butler is concerned solely with theory as over against practice like pure, as compared with applied mathematics. His sermons are really contributions to the subject of Christian Ethics. On the other hand, it may be remarked with reason that F.D. Maurice was an acute thinker, and that he would not have written as he has done unless he had adequate grounds for his conclusions.

In that connection, it must be noted again that Gladstone had an amazing capacity for finding in books what he wanted to find. Too often the wish seems to be father to the thought. That seems to be the best explanation for two passages in his letters in which he declares that Augustine and Butler held the same theological views on human nature. It will be recalled that there were two of the masters to whom he professed boundless indebtedness and allegiance, the others being Aristotle and Dante. This curious limitation may have been due to his innate lack of originality. He was ever a learner, and an excessively docile and uncritical one at that, especially when his emotional nature was deeply moved. These are the passages in question. "In like manner at Oxford, I do not doubt that in 1830 and 1831 the study of Bishop Butler laid the ground for new modes in religion, but his teaching in the sermons on our moral nature was not integrated, so to speak, until several years later by larger perusal of the works of Saint Augustine. I may, therefore, say that I was not of a mind ill-disposed to submit to authority." (Morley I, p.161). We may linger yet again over that last sentence since it throws a flood of light on Gladstone's career as well as on his theology. He was ever a friend and lover of authority/

authority in every walk and phase of life. That explained his reverence for the Crown despite the fact that his relations with Queen Victoria tended to be somewhat formal and frigid. In the same way, it explains much of his theological sympathies and affinities. He was apt, as Morley observes, to accept doctrines as true because they have the imprimatur of Butler, and not because of their intrinsic merits.

The other sentences appear in Morley II. p.544. The context is worth quoting as a sidelight on Gladstone's theology.

"A learned unitarian (Beard) sends him a volume of Hibbert lectures. 'All systems' Mr Gladstone writes in acknowledging it, 'have their slang, but what I find in almost every page of your book is that you have none.' He complains, however, of finding Augustine put into a leash with Luther and Calvin. Augustine's doctrine of human nature is substantially that of Bishop Butler; and he converted me about forty-five years ago to Butler's doctrine." Butler does not lay sufficient stress on the truth that human nature is in a fallen state. He takes little count of original sin which meant so much to the great Latin Father. Gladstone proved himself to be a truer disciple of Augustine when he writes in 1895, "*me principem peccatorum*". (Lathbury. Gladstone's Letters. II. p.73) than in the sentences just quoted.

Goldwin Smith had criticized Butler for his dearth of emotion, while Macaulay charges Gladstone with its excess. In his famous review of Gladstone's book on the relations of Church and State, he comments on the absence of what Bacon calls/

calls dry light. Butler's fascination for Gladstone may thus illustrate Ewald's remark that opposites attract opposites. Gladstone rallies to the defence of Butler by arguing that the latter abjured emotion because of its tendency to distract the judgment. He will not agree, however, that Butler was incapable of deep feeling. In proof, he appeals to the sermons on the love of God. "He notes with care the ascending stages of this love. It should pass beyond servile fear, and should attain to 'resignation', a phrase by which Butler means not merely passing sentiment, but an entire concurrence with the Divine Will. All earthly objects, he observes, leave a void in us, which only God Himself can adequately supply." (Ibid p.75). There is a fine passage in one of Gladstone's letters which will illustrate what is meant by complete acquiescence in the will of God. Writing to Mrs Gladstone on January 21, 1844, he says, "But there is a speech in the third canto of the Paradiso of Dante, spoken by a certain Piccarda, which is a rare gem. I will only quote this one line:

In la sua volontade e nostra pace.

The words are few and simple, and yet they appear to me to have an inexpressible majesty of truth about them, to be almost as if they were spoken from the very mouth of God." (Morley I. p.215). Writing in "The Spectator" Mr E.L. Woodward observed that no familiarity with these words of Dante can make them too familiar.

As for Mark Pattison's adverse criticisms, it may be observed that it was owing to his influence that Butler was removed/

removed from the list of authors required for study by candidates in the Honours School at Oxford. It has been suggested that that step was taken in view of Butler's affinities with sacerdotal teaching, although the ostensible reason for Mark Pattison's attitude is that Butler's method is ill-suited to serve as a model for mental discipline. It tends too much to the consideration of detail so that the sense of proportion is apt to be lost. Pattison has no serious fault to find with Butler's subject, or his reasoning with its absolute loyalty to logic, a feature which helps to explain its fascination for Gladstone, whose mind was an egregiously logical one.

CHAPTER XII.

There is a great deal of interesting material in these Butler papers but it is hardly relevant to the present purpose which is the discussion of Gladstone's theology. It ought to be of real value to any student of Butler for Gladstone cannot help saying something fresh and stimulating, whatever be the subject to which he addressed himself. Allusion must again be made to this fact, for in almost every essay there is a pearl of great price amongst the goodly pearls with which they reward the reader. One would fain assemble these but that is not germane to a study of theology. It is needful then to concentrate attention on those chapters which throw some definite light upon theological questions.

Some additional reference may be made to the fact that Gladstone claimed to follow Augustine rather than Calvin in his views on human depravity. He does not deny the power and prevalence of evil in the heart of man, nor the exceeding sinfulness of sin. He accepts himself the doctrine of original sin. Indeed Gladstone is credited with the observation that one of the deepest needs in modern piety is a revived sense of sin. But he is in cordial agreement with Bishop Butler when in his Sermons he gives the impression that he does not take such a pessimistic view of the unregenerate soul as Jonathan Edwards, to name an extreme example of a Calvinistic theologian. "It is idle, as I conceive," Gladstone writes, "to dispute Butler's doctrine of human nature on account of that other doctrine/

doctrine of ruin through sin, which he has not less emphatically set forth. The gamut, or register, in musical phrase, of humanity is of enormous range. Capable of contracting into littleness and meanness, and sinking into unfathomable depths of depravity, it has the correlative capacity of rising to supreme heights of excellence; to moral heights bordering upon perfection, as well as to lofty planes of genius." (Ibid p.101).

Following Gladstone in his unsystematic handling of miscellaneous theological topics, it may be said that his words regarding habit, based on Butler who laid as great stress on it as William James, the American psychologist, are all too true. Habits are the steel framework of character. Here are Gladstone's wise observations on their formation. "They are the product of use, or single acts over and over again repeated. Thoughts which have no proper regard to action, and impressions which are purely passive, lose force by this repetition; but active habits, mental processes which contemplate or take effect in action, gain it." (Ibid p.203). Butler makes much of this distinction between active and passive impressions. Gladstone illustrates the difference by reference to the work of the surgeon who becomes inured to the sight of suffering, and by the same means, increasingly skilful in its relief.

As for Butler's favourite doctrine of man's ignorance and limitations, Gladstone makes some remarks in his best Parliamentary manner. "A corner-stone of Butler's mental system is certainly to be found in his strong but carefully bounded view of/

of human ignorance. There is no part of his teaching more urgently required at the present day, when not only are the large accessions to human knowledge apt to be over-valued by some of those who at least have laboured hard to learn and perhaps to add to them; but when many are totally ignorant of what they are, vaingloriously boast of them, as if sciolism approximated to omniscience." (Ibid p.105). These words were written towards the close of last century, a great and glorious era in British history. They have not lost their relevance for the present age. Butler and Gladstone would have cordially agreed with Dr Chalmers in his observation that, as we increase the diameter of light, we enlarge the circumference of darkness.

The mention of Dr Chalmers leads to another criticism which has been made on Butler with a good deal of reluctance by him and other students of the Analogy. They maintain that Butler's books are lacking in what Dr Chalmers has called the *sal evangelicum*. In short, Butler's pages breathe a spirit of legalism rather than of evangelical piety. To these comments Gladstone replies by appealing to the primary purpose of Butler's works which was the defence of natural and revealed religion against infidelity, and, more narrowly, of revelation from the contentions of the Deists that it was superfluous. Gladstone tries to show that Butler gives due prominence to the great evangelical doctrines. But while that is undeniable, his relations with Wesley reveal where his sympathies lay. He cannot be described as evangelical in/

in the proper sense of the term. He might more aptly be characterised as a forerunner of the Broad Church party in the great Anglican communion whose name he adorns.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Butler was in his twenty-second year, he exchanged a series of letters with Dr Samuel Clarke of Norwich, the leading English philosopher of that day. The correspondence commenced in November, 1713. The nine epistles are usually printed in editions of Butler's works. Gladstone includes them in his own edition, and furnishes a concise summary of their contents. Butler's first letter was unsigned, purporting to have been written by "A Gentleman in Gloucestershire." It was posted by his life-long friend, Secker, who was destined to become Archbishop of Canterbury. The occasion of the letter was Butler's study of Clarke's famous book, "A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God." The former professes himself to be in substantial agreement with its arguments, but seeks a fuller explanation on two points which had puzzled him. One was Clarke's demonstration of the doctrine that the self-existent Being must be omnipresent, and the other his contention that God must be one. Clarke endeavours to establish belief in God's existence by a priori reasoning. He makes great use of the ontological argument that the mere idea of God inevitably involves His existence and self-existence.

Gladstone devotes one of these Butler essays to this correspondence, recapitulating their substance with a lucidity and simplicity which makes it easy for the general reader to appreciate the arguments employed. Finite beings can be conceived as non-existent, but it is impossible to entertain the notion of an infinite/

infinite and self-existent being who is yet non-existent. For Clarke, however, existence had apparently no meaning apart from space. Accordingly he argues that this infinite and self-existent being must be omnipresent. For him absence from spatial conditions simply spells non-existence, and if this supreme being can be conceived as absence from one part of space, it may be urged that he is also absent from others or all, and all the time, and thus he would cease to exist. It follows accordingly on Clarke's hypothesis regarding the necessary connection of space and time that God must be omnipresent because He is also self-existent. That is a necessity of thought. Butler objects that on Clarke's reasoning omnipresence is not naturally implied. God may still be present in one point of space and absent from another. It is not justifiable to argue from one instance to all in this sweeping fashion.

The second problem, raised by Butler, owes its origin to Clarke's contention that the self-existent being must be one. He argues that there cannot be two such existences independent of each other. His reasons are that, if there could be two such beings, then one might be conceived as non-existent, or lacking in necessary existence. To these arguments Butler rejoins that Clarke has failed to furnish adequate evidence that self-existence can only be predicated of one such being.

The correspondence which ensued serves to reveal Butler's distaste for metaphysics. He seems to be slow in grasping Clarke's contention that space and time are properties of the self-existent/

self-existent being. Butler takes the view that these are the very conditions of existence for the ultimate reality. He argues that space and time are antecedently necessary for the very fact of existence. In the end Butler declares himself to be satisfied with Clarke's reasoning.

Our immediate concern is, however, with Gladstone's comments. These consist mainly in contentions that space is not absolutely indispensable to the notion of existence. It is true that we cannot imagine existence without space any more than we can from mental pictures of the conclusions reached by processes associated with the higher mathematics. In the mental world, as in the spiritual, we must walk by faith and not by sight. These are not very profound observations. There is more substance in a suggestion that the indissoluble association of space and deity is unconsciously due to the pervading anthropomorphism of Holy Scripture.

We move to more characteristic and distinctive ground when we find that Gladstone connects this controversy with Eucharistic doctrine. He was frequently given to tracing relationships of the *lucus a non lucendo* order. Thus some of his speculations in connection with the religious teaching of the Homeric poems collapse under the weight of their own absurdity, to turn one of his verbal broadsides against himself. Attempts to find a *preparatio evangelica* in Homer are apt to be more ingenious than ingenuous. As far as the Butler-Clarke correspondence is concerned, Gladstone argues that the problem of Divine Omnipresence has a bearing on the Roman Catholic dogma of the Real Presence/

Presence. Protagonists of Protestantism had argued that, since the Presence of Christ is everywhere manifest, it cannot be properly localized on the Christian altar in that specialised sense required by the sacramental teaching just mentioned. Gladstone's reply is that after Our Lord's Resurrection, His body seemed to be of such a character as to solve the problem. It was entirely emancipated from spatial limitations, and yet it could adapt itself to them when the need arose. In these circumstances, it can be urged that the sacramental impartation of Our Lord's body is thus explained and justified. The light and heat of the sun continue to pervade the landscape even when they are focussed by a special glass on a particular spot. In the same way, he suggests that the Divine Presence can be both diffused and concentrated, if such language can be used with reverence with reference to such ineffable mysteries, thus vindicating the sacerdotal theory of the sacraments.

Gladstone was a convinced believer in sacramental grace, as his behaviour at Holy Communion proved again and again. Long after other communicants had returned to their pews, the old saint would remain at the rail, "lost in wonder, love, and praise." It need then be no cause for surprise that Butler is claimed as a defender of his distinctive position. "It was, however, only by Butler's youthful and soon-abandoned contention, which placed the self-existent not in space at large, but in some particular part of space, that he would be said to satisfy the Zwinglian, or extreme Protestant, contention. When he admitted, as he promptly came to admit, that the omnipresence of the self-existent in space essentially followed from its presence in any part of space, he by implication lost hold of the doctrine that a Real Presence

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Presence in more than some one portion of space was impossible. We have no proof, however, from the correspondence that either of the authors had consciously in view any connexion between it and the true doctrine of the Eucharistic Presence." (Ibid p.128).

CHAPTER XIV.

Gladstone's beliefs regarding the future life are amongst the most outstanding and distinctive features of his theological opinions. They are expounded and defended with considerable detail in the second part of his Butler Studies. The general character of these convictions may be discovered from a reminiscence of him by his old friend and biographer, G.W.E. Russell. "Never shall I forget the hour when I sat with him in the park of Hawarden, while a thunderstorm was gathering over our heads, and he, all unheeding, poured forth, in those organ-tones of profound conviction, his belief that the soul is not necessarily indestructible, but that immortality is the gift of God in Christ to the believer. The impression of that discourse will not be effaced until the tablets of memory are finally blotted." (Sir Wemyss Reid's Life of Gladstone. p.326). This was a subject on which he thought and felt deeply as these sentences will prove. There are fugitive references to it in his voluminous correspondence and other writings, but he does not appear to have attempted a systematic account of what he believed regarding this baffling theme until he himself had come within sight and sound of that fair land where we know as we are known. There is surely something moving in the spectacle of the grand old man musing on the immortality of the soul, as he himself stood on the very brink of a grave in Westminster Abbey.

He makes the point of departure Butler's chapter in the
Analogy/

Analogy which is devoted to the future life. With the sure insight of a great debater and logician, he calls attention to the fact that Butler's conclusions are of a negative order. They do not amount to much more than a strong presumption that death does not end all. Human life furnishes impressive instances of changes taking place on such a scale that it is hard to see how personality can survive them, and yet it continues to persist in undiminished vigour. The best example cited is pre-natal life which contrasts so sharply with independent existence. On that analogy, it may well be contended that death may only be an incident in the story of the soul and not its end. *Mors janua vitae*. Gladstone strives to make the most of Butler's reticence on the subject. Personally he was strongly opposed to the doctrine that the human soul is naturally immortal, and he tries to show that Butler's language does not commit him to anything more on the subject than that death cannot necessarily be regarded as the end of human life. It is arguable that Gladstone fails to do full justice to Butler's caution. He is anxious to enlist him as a supporter of his personal views on the subject, oblivious of the fact that Butler's reserve can be interpreted in more ways than one. His guarded statements are easy to reconcile with belief in the natural immortality of the soul, a doctrine which Butler, in point of fact, explicitly accepts as will be demonstrated by a quotation, appearing in a subsequent paragraph.

As far as Butler's reasoning supports the doctrine that the soul of man will survive death, Gladstone is prepared to follow/

follow in his train, both when the arguments are positive and negative. He summarizes the former in fourteen propositions, and the latter in three. Gladstone, it may be observed again in passing, was a past master in attention to detail. He was a minute philosopher, if ever there was one. That is illustrated by his handwriting. Despite the incredible extent of his efforts with the pen, no letters are left uncrossed or undotted. On the other hand, let it be emphasised once more, that he never seemed to be able to grasp the principle that the truth or falsity of a case hinges on one or two considerations of commanding importance. If these can be demolished, the whole superstructure of argument and evidence will come crashing to the ground like Dagon's Temple when Samson, "eyeless in Gaza," laid his hands upon its two supporting pillars. It is accordingly superfluous to survey all the considerations marshalled by Gladstone like the entries in a ledger. Butler's chief argument, based on the analogy of the survival of personality through all kinds of changes, has already been mentioned. He also lays a good deal of stress on the fact that the soul of man is incapable of dissolution unlike a material substance. It is "indiscerptible", to use Butler's clumsy word, and characteristically so.

In discussing the latter's arguments on the subject, Gladstone is quick to seize on points which support the historic doctrine of the soul's immortality, and to criticize them. Thus he queries Butler's contention that the soul of man is indiscerptible on the score that the epithet is irrelevant, since/

since the soul's mode of existence is not spatial. He is thus following in the steps of Kant who taught that body and soul are two entities which differ not in degree but in kind. It is, therefore, unjustifiable to suggest that the soul cannot be resolved into its component parts. As applied to spiritual essences, the words are simply meaningless. The advantage there surely lies with Gladstone.

Butler also argues that the mere fact of existence implies continuance until it can be shown that the entity in question must needs come to an end. Gladstone replies that the continued existence of anything depends on the purpose which it subserves. He takes a rose as an example. "May it not be held that the likelihood of this or that entity's continuance cannot be measured until after first measuring the arguments for its present existence? We may presume (always proceeding upon the postulate that there is an Author of nature) upon the continuance of a rosebud in one way, but upon the continuance of a decaying rose only in a different and much more limited way. If things exist only for an end, the strength of the argument for their continuance will surely depend, in each case, upon the condition they have reached with regard to the attainment of that end." (Ibid p.149). Gladstone seems here to be drawing a distinction without a difference. The purpose of existence would doubtless, on Butler's view, constitute a reason for its continuance or otherwise.

There is, however, a world of difference between the mere survival of the soul, and its natural immortality. Gladstone moves/

moves earth and stone to demonstrate that he is faithfully representing Butler's position when he maintains that the soul of man is not naturally immortal. In his efforts, he has to reckon with three crucial references in Butler's pages. It is true that these are all of an occasional character, for Butler was not immediately concerned with the problem of human immortality. As Gladstone himself observes, Butler only raises the question at all because he was afraid that his doctrine concerning personal identity in the future life should be challenged. The subject of personal identity and its continuance is made the subject of a brief excursus which originally formed part of the chapter on a future life. In the last analysis, Butler's references to the future life take their rise simply and solely in his desire to establish the truth that God has annexed rewards and penalties to righteousness and evil respectively. The seeming injustices and inequalities associated with these in this life are redressed in the world to come.

As for Butler's three references to immortality, one deals with the survival of animals. (Analogy p.32. Gladstone's Edition). He does not actually commit himself to such a belief, although his contemporary, John Wesley, championed it. On the other hand, Butler appears to admit the possibility. The second reference consists in the stump of a sentence, "especially whilst the probability of a future life, or the natural immortality of the soul, is admitted upon the evidence of reason" (Analogy p.31, Gladstone's Edition). Here is Gladstone's comment, printed in

a foot-note. "This opinion, not explicitly adopted by Butler, appears to come before us from two points of view: (1) As built upon the evidence of reason; (2) As a part of Natural Religion made known by a primitive Revelation" (Ibid p.39). With regard to the arguments based solely on ratiocination, Butler could not but have been acquainted with a treatise from the pen of his old correspondent, Dr Samuel Clarke, in which the latter defends the natural immortality of the soul against the theory of Henry Dodwell, the elder, that the soul of man only becomes immortal after the valid administration of baptism. Butler must have agreed with Clarke, as the next paragraph will prove.

Butler unquestionably believed in the natural immortality of the soul as the third of these references to the subject in his works will reveal. It consists of two sentences in the Second Part of the Analogy (Ibid p.158). "Nor must it by any means be omitted, for it is a thing of the utmost importance, that the life and immortality are eminently brought to light by the gospel. The great doctrines of a future state, the danger of a course of wickedness, and the efficacy of repentance, are not only confirmed in the gospel, but are taught, especially the last is, with a degree of light to which that of nature is but darkness." Gladstone's observations on these words are illuminating on two subsidiary grounds, quite apart from their bearing on the matter which is under discussion. On the one hand, they illustrate his inveterate tendency to what Morley calls sophistry and subtlety, and they betray, on the other, a remarkable/

remarkable ignorance of Biblical theology. This is what he writes with regard to Butler's statements whose import seems to be as plain as a pikestaff. "But, if immortality were known already and independent of the gospel, it is only in a feeble and secondary sense that we can say of it (as e.g. of right and wrong) that it was brought to the light by the gospel. Evidently Butler's position would be far stronger if, with many Christian writers of the earliest centuries, he had been liberated from the belief that the soul was indefeasibly immortal." (Ibid p.158). Gladstone here minimizes the effect of the gospel on men's beliefs regarding the future life, and along other lines as well. He fails abjectly to do justice to the immeasurable difference which Christ has made in every department of man's life and work and thought, all the more so because He built on other men's foundations, and delighted to do so. One wonders if Gladstone had ever set himself to compare the teaching of the Old and New Testaments on almost any subject, but supremely on the eternal destiny of the human spirit. There can only be one result of such an investigation, and that is the cordial endorsement of Butler's words whose strength gains by his habitual moderation in language.

Gladstone, however, is incorrigible. He simply declines to accept the testimony of these references. He must convince himself and his readers that Butler's teaching means no more than that the soul will survive after death. Referring to the doctrine of natural immortality in the Analogy, Gladstone argues in/

in this characteristic, if crooked, fashion. "Had he been prepared to propound it, he would surely have altered the whole argument of his first Chapter; for, if the natural immortality of the soul be an established truth, it must at once take precedence of all those elaborate presumptions, which he has adopted for the basis of his reasoning in favour of a future life. He argues for a future life as hope, as credibility, as likelihood; but he does not venture to propound it as a thing of dogma, or as a certainty. Had he felt himself in a condition to propound it as an established truth, his whole attitude in the first Chapter must apparently have been changed. That dogma would have been the head and front of the discussion; and all his rebuttals of adverse presumption, and his modest pleas for favourable inference, needed at most only to appear as an army of auxiliaries, preparing and making straight the way for the acceptance of that doctrine." (Ibid p.152). Gladstone forgets that the chapter in question is concerned solely with natural religion. That inevitably limits its scope and contentions.

CHAPTER XV.

There is an old saying that an obstinate man does not possess his opinions but his opinions possess him. It is illustrated by Gladstone's survey of the history of thought on the subject of the soul's immortality. That is of a very cursory kind. It could not have been otherwise. Some objection may be taken to his supposition that Butler himself had reviewed this vast mass of speculation, and that his conclusions had been reached as a result. Butler does not give the impression of having been a wide reader. In any case, there is no evidence that he would have been led to modify the views which he states so clearly and emphatically. He is convinced that the human spirit will endure for evermore. Gladstone declines to believe that, and there are none so blind as those who will not see.

Commencing his birdseye view with the classical period, he observes "Grote declares that Plato settled nothing, and agrees with Lord Macaulay that the philosophers, from Plato to Franklin, who attempted to prove immortality without the aid of revelation, failed deplorably." (Ibid p.159) Incidentally that fact surely explains Butler's reserve and reticence in dealing with the same subject solely on the evidence furnished by natural theology. That was not due as Gladstone supposes to scepticism on the doctrine of natural immortality but to the incomplete character of the evidence. That contention has been urged already but it will repay repetition since it goes far to explain a great deal/

deal of what Gladstone says on the subject.

Turning to popular thinking on the subject in the classical age, he finds it easy to adduce a large mass of evidence that there was a good deal of doubt and hesitation regarding a future life in ancient Greece and Rome with regard to the soul's immortality, both amongst the cultured and the simple. Attention is deliberately confined to that line of evidence to the exclusion of the remarkable testimony borne by ethnic religions with their overwhelming witness to the universal conviction that the soul of man will never die. The reason alleged is that the study of that subject was unknown in Butler's day, and the purpose of the paper is merely to recapitulate the history of speculation on the subject before Butler's day, with a view to proving that there has always been a large body of opinion which has been decidedly sceptical with regard to the natural immortality of the soul, and with which he agreed.

In the discussion of Old Testament teaching on the future life, Gladstone does not deal very thoroughly with the question. One explanation was his refusal to believe that the Bible sanctioned the doctrine of natural immortality. "Another consideration of the highest importance is that natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of an ingeniously sustained, but gravely and formidably contested philosophical opinion." (Ibid p.198). These are the words of an octogenarian, and it is a well known fact that the passing years make men more/

more tenacious than ever of cherished beliefs. That is the only extenuation for such a preposterous statement that the natural immortality of the soul finds no support in the Bible.

Some specimens of his handling of Scriptural references to the subject may be cited. Thus he makes mention of Genesis I. 26. "In Genesis I: 26 we read thus: 'And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness'; and much thought has been bestowed on the great enquiry, wherein did this image of God consist." (Ibid p.163). Appeal is at once made to the verdict of Augustine, for Gladstone was ever the loyal henchman of some authority, in this case to one of the four captains of his soul. In his exegesis of these words Augustine definitely commits himself to statements which give countenance to a theory of conditional immortality, although the general trend of his teaching is in favour of the natural immortality of the human soul.

The case of Enoch is then raised and summarily dismissed since "it relates only to a person of distinguished righteousness." (Ibid p.166). An excellent point is made in a reference to the Mosaic legislation as a whole in that it does not invoke eschatological sanctions. Passing allusions follow with reference to a variety of verses and passages dealing with the life to come, and the conclusion is finally reached that there is no warrant for belief in anything more than the soul's survival after death as far as the Old Testament is concerned. With regard to the testimony of ethnic religions he refuses to allow it any decisive weight, and the same applies to the creed of Judaism in the days of Our Lord. He concedes that the Essenes believed in the natural/

natural immortality of the soul, but in general he regards the evidence which he produces as furnishing support for his foregone conclusion that the spirit of man will surely survive death, but it will not necessarily endure for all eternity.

There is nothing either distinctive or original in his cursory survey of New Testament teaching on the same subject. Its clear witness to human immortality seems to have been lost on Gladstone, and that need be no cause for wonder since he was obsessed with the idea that man's soul possessed no inherent and indefeasible title to indestructibility. One of his observations is so acute that it calls for special comment. It was a favourite argument. "Union with God is not only a state, but is also a law of existence." (Ibid p.177) The inference is that souls, which are separated from God by sin and unbelief, must of necessity wither and perish. He cleverly argues that eternal life and eternal death are not logical opposites in the sense that both refer to endless existence in bliss or the reverse. He maintains that eternal death is more akin to the death of the body. It is a final cessation of being. Eternal death is not thus a synonym for conscious and everlasting exclusion from the Divine presence and favour. It is not the opposite to eternal life.

The obvious answer is that eternal life, which is the gift of God in Christ Jesus to all who believe His holy gospel, is qualitative rather than quantitative. It is the life of God in the soul of man. On the other hand, Gladstone argues that the spiritually lost survive death that they may reap the reward of/

of the deeds done in the flesh in the world to come, but they will not abide for all eternity like those who have sown to the Spirit, and of the Spirit reaped life everlasting. There can be no eternal life without union with God. Canon Malcolm MacColl has told how he once preached before Gladstone in Hawarden Parish Church, and took occasion to state that there can be no life apart from God. On raising the subject with the old statesman later in the day, he elicited an emphatic affirmative to that proposition. But did Gladstone distinguish with sufficient precision between natural and spiritual life? It is undeniable that in God we all live and move and have our being. That is the ultimate condition of existence. In Christ all things consist. But the pivotal consideration in everlasting life is surely something far better, as nobody knew better than Gladstone himself from his religious experience. "On the head and front of the new teaching was written the great doctrine of the Resurrection. Resurrection did not solely point to something about to happen in a future state; it meant also a present change, our union upon earth with the Life of Christ, which was to be perpetuated beyond the grave, and to be consummated by the final resumption of the body. (Ibid p.174).

Gladstone devotes another essay to the history of patristic opinion on this section of eschatology. He attaches great importance to this line of investigation as becomes a fervent disciple of the Oxford Movement. Thus he criticizes Principal S.D.F. Salmond's "Christian Doctrine of Immortality" on the score/

score that it does not take adequate account of early Christian discussions of the subject. "Dr Salmond's Christian Doctrine of immortality is an able, truth-loving, and, from many points of view, comprehensive work; but it does not supply any history of the course and variation of Christian opinion during the centuries since the Advent." (Ibid p.182). Gladstone endeavours to make good this deficiency with a view to proving that the Christian Church as a whole only adopted the doctrine of natural immortality at a comparatively late period. A great deal of what he has written seems to savour strongly of special pleading. He would find few to endorse his interpretation of the trends of thought on the subject prior to the Reformation.

Reference may be made to two arguments which can fairly be described as Gladstonian. He maintains that the doctrine of natural immortality was never made the subject of an ecclesiastical pronouncement, akin to those which dealt so definitely and drastically with such fundamental articles of faith as Our Lord's Divinity, or the Trinity. Gladstone's explanation is that the doctrine of natural immortality wormed its way by degrees into the corpus of official theology. It never appears to have struck him that the real reason why this doctrine was not made the subject of discussion on a large scale was the same as that which explains the similar treatment given to such a foundation principle as ethical monotheism. Both were taken for granted like the law of universal causation. It was not discussed because it was neither denied nor disputed in any serious measure from the beginning of the gospel.

Another/

Another characteristic line of reasoning is that some master mind has always been raised up by God to solve these oppressive problems of theology which from time to time have bidden fair to rend in twain the seamless robe of Christ. He reminds the reader of the part which Augustine played in the Pelagian controversy as a case in point. As far as the question of natural immortality is concerned, no such champion has made his appearance. That contention hardly seems to be sustained by his rapid review of theological speculation on the subject. He specifically mentions Tertullian, Origen, and Augustine as protagonists of natural immortality, and he makes no reference to any outstanding figure who took the opposite view. Indeed Gladstone seems to rest his argument on the divided state of opinion on the subject for some centuries rather than on the emergence of some Athanasius. To turn his guns upon himself, one would have expected that some doughty defender of the doctrine that the soul is not naturally immortal would have arisen whose name would for ever be associated with its successful propagation but no such figure is mentioned. In short, it cannot be said that Gladstone's survey of Biblical and patristic teaching on the subject contributes very much to the demonstration of a doctrine which was so dear to his heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

From the history of theological speculation on the future life, Gladstone turns in two papers to examine the various theories which held the field in his day. His motive in so doing, and, indeed, of lavishing so much time and trouble on the subject despite the fact that he was more than fourscore years of age is an eminently practical one. He was deeply concerned about the growing indifference of the British pulpit to eschatological questions. He regarded this neglect as a source of weakness. "There is surely a side of the Divine teaching set forth in the Scriptures, which shows that the Christian dispensation, when it fails in its grand purpose of operating as a savour of life unto life, will be a savour of death unto death; and this under no new or arbitrary rule, but under the law, wide as the universe, that guilt deepens according to the knowledge with which it is incurred, and to the opportunities which it despises or neglects. Therefore the great Apostle of the grace of God sets before us this side of his teaching: 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.' Menace as well as promise, menace for those whom promise could not melt or move, formed an essential part of the provision for working out the redemption of the world. And I ask myself the question, what place, in the ordinary range of Christian teaching, is now found for 'the terrors of the Lord'?" (Ibid p.199). There spoke the evangelist in Gladstone for he was both evangelical and evangelistic in spirit.

His discussion centres round the three leading doctrines with/

with regard to the fate of the impenitent in the world to come. The theory that men perish at death, body, soul, and spirit, he curtly dismisses as lying outside the sphere of discussion. The other three he considers with more attention. These are the traditional view that, if the soul that sinneth dies unrepentant and unbelieving, it will be consigned to the place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; secondly, the theory known as conditional immortality which is based on the denial of the claim that the spirit of man is essentially and inalienably immortal, and maintains that it is capable of entering into everlasting life by union with the Divine through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and lastly, the hypothesis of universalism or universal restoration whereby all created things will finally enter into everlasting blessedness by complete reconciliation to the will of God. In the case of the last two, the annihilation or reclamation of the impenitent may be preceded by a temporary stage of chastisement.

In dealing with the traditional view that the incorrigible sinner will never cease to suffer for his disobedience, Gladstone has some suggestive things to say on the exegesis of the ancient word "eternal", although it is often hard to pin him down to a definite and final statement of what his conclusions and convictions were. That was characteristic of him in politics as well as in theology. He first explains the meaning of the adjective as it is commonly accepted, and then he endeavours to convey the impression that, in the classical age, eternity was a synonym for a prolonged period which need not, however, be/
be/

be endless. He bases that contention upon the inability of the primitive mentality to think in large numbers. "But the Scriptures nowhere, I think, deal definitely with very large numbers. In the Apocalypse the phrase 'Ten thousand times ten thousand' is plainly figurative, and the total it expresses in modern numeration is small. We have now by slow degrees become familiar with hundreds and even thousands of millions, partly in connexion with money, and much more largely in connexion with astronomical computations." (Ibid p.203). His conclusion appears to be that the word need not be explained in its common and ordinary sense when used in the pages of the Bible.

A more subtle argument against the interpretation of the word as signifying endless existence is found in a consideration of its Greek equivalent aionios. It is based on^a theory propounded by De Quincey. "Mr De Quincey, who was both scholar and philosopher, has written a paper on this word, and he says, apparently with much truth: 'The exact amount of the duration expressed by our aeon depends altogether upon the particular subject which yields the aeon.' It is 'the duration or cycle of existence which belongs to any object in right of its genius'.

One approximate rendering of the word aionios is perhaps to be found in life-long. If this be a sense admitted in Scripture, then the phrase as used in the great parable of Matthew XXV simply throws us back on the question, what is the ordained life of the soul? Is it limited, or is it, by its nature extended without end? The adjective will lend itself either way."

(Ibid/

(Ibid p.217). Such reasoning seems to savour of excessive subtlety. Perhaps the wish was father to the thought. It is true that the heart has its own logic as well as the head but Viscount Bryce said no more than was justified when he remarked that the adage, *pectus facit theologum*, is responsible for a great deal of weak theology. (Biographical Studies p.276). In any case, this argument simply begs the question. The duration or cycle of existence of the soul may well be everlasting even as God its maker is from everlasting to everlasting.

Before proceeding to deal in more detail with Gladstone's criticisms of eschatological theory, it is desirable that his own position should be made perfectly plain, and that is best done in his own words. "And I wish frankly to express my consciousness that, while I labour to bring real difficulties into view, I have no grand solutions of the kind now in vogue to offer; that I must be more forward in recommending the abandonment than the adoption of ideas; that my prescriptions, so to call them, lie on the lines of reserve, abstention, and thereby of escape from extremes and exaggerations. And this I set about with full cognizance of the fact that no mode of treatment can be more chilling and repellent to the ordinary reader." (Ibid p.208). In a sentence Gladstone's position is that he suspends judgment on the eternal fate of the wicked.

Turning first to the more common teaching on the subject, that everlasting woe is the lot of the hardened sinner in the world to come, he points out that it rests on two presuppositions, one being the natural immortality of the soul, and the other the/

the interpretation of the word "eternal" as endless. He cites Pusey as a typical champion of this doctrine, and expounds his presentation of the case. He also makes reference to a book by a Dr Thomas Burnet, published in 1728, in which the author argues that the punishment of sin in the next world is neither finite nor infinite, but rather indefinite, as far as the problem of its duration can be envisaged. There is also appreciative comment on some lines from "In Memoriam", in which Tennyson, whose poetry Gladstone admired very much, eulogizes the instinctive desire that springs eternal like hope in the human breast that all should finally come to the true knowledge of God and be saved.

The wish, that of the living whole,

No life may fail beyond the grave

Derives it not from what we have

The likest God within the soul.

Gladstone's wise remark is that it is better far to leave God Himself to rectify the faults and flaws in His universe in any way which seems to be good in His sight. Some paragraphs on eternal death are of interest, if, for no other reason, because they illustrate once more the acuteness of Gladstone's mind.

"If we are told that life in like manner signifies in the future state both the goodness of the righteous and the enjoyment consequent upon that goodness, I demur to the proposition. The life promised is union with God which is union with goodness. Enjoyment may be its inseparable accident: but it is not the thing/

thing signified. Whereas, in the controversy concerning the wicked, everything is made and understood to turn upon their suffering, while the eternity of their vice is little heard of, and certainly is not the idea either primarily or prominently suggested to the mind." (Ibid p.216). That is a grave difficulty with which the old and orthodox view is encumbered. Is sin an everlasting surd in the scheme of things? The best solution wears the guise of a counsel of despair. It is found in the words of Our Lord that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. The key to the solution of the problem lies in a pierced hand.

With regard to the theory of conditional immortality, Gladstone professes himself as unable to accept it although it has so many and close affinities with his own view of reverent agnosticism. His objections are based on various grounds. It cannot appeal with much confidence to a warrant in the teaching of Scripture. Again it fails to pass the test of quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus. Yet again he continues, "It seems to introduce a strange anomaly in a resurrection which is to be effected with a view to extinction: and most of all, it founds Christian theology upon a tenet of philosophy, though it happens in a former case the tenet was affirmative, whereas here it happens to be negative. (Ibid p.219). The reference is to the doctrine of natural immortality. In the case of this theory, it is assumed that the human soul is capable of complete extinction.

True/

True to his orthodox unbringing and convictions, Gladstone rejects decisively the theory of universalism. He observes that logically it must include the restoration to a state of reconciliation with God all manner of existences, supernatural and natural, who at present may be out of full harmony with Him. The result is that Satan and his angels will share in the universal act of restoration. Gladstone opposes such teaching on the score that it is radically incompatible with the teaching of the New Testament on the unpardonable sin (Matt: XII. 31-32; Mark III. 28; Luke XII. 10 of John V. 16). Again he calls attention to the grave difficulty that no provision is made for the reformation of character as the consequence of the castigation of evildoers in the next world. Thus the penalty of sin beyond the grave resembles the sentence in an earthly court of justice which is not concerned with the reclamation of the offender. It is vindictive not corrective. Such a theory, he rightly urges, tends to minimize the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

The influence of Butler is manifest in another criticism which Gladstone makes of a theory of universalism. "If there be one fact more largely and solidly established by experience than any other, it is, apart from all controversy as to the relative weight of environment and endowment, that conduct is the instrument by which character is formed, and that habit systematically pursued tends, and tends without any known limit, to harden into fixity." (ibid p.222). That is indeed a powerful argument, and Gladstone employs it to counter Dr Salmond when he/

he suggests, in mitigation of the traditional doctrine, that, as long as there is life, there is hope for the sinner, since God is ever ready and able to respond to the faintest movement of faith and repentance. "In our common experience the candle is not relumed from the dying spark upon the wick; and the movement of death has oftentimes conclusively set in while its mechanical completion is still delayed; nor can any doctrine be more at variance with reason than that which teaches, or implies, that no process has been determined until it has been closed." (Ibid p.208). Gladstone must have overlooked the story of the dying thief, Our Lord's companion in affliction as He hung upon His cross, although, in fairness and justice to the old moralist, let it be said that there was one saved then that none might despair, and only one that none might presume. It ought to be added that the influence of Butler again appears in Gladstone's vigorous protest against the arrogance of such as try to add to the sum of Divine revelation regarding the future life by all manner of speculations.

CHAPTER XVII.

Gladstone's personal views on the subject of immortality were rather critical than constructive as has already been mentioned. He thus defines the purpose of his elaborate investigation of the problem. "As a general apology for the papers now to be brought to a close, I advance a proposition, which, at least in its general terms, will not be gravely contested. Those who are conscious of their inability to solve a problem or close a controversy, may, nevertheless, render a real, though limited service if they can eject from it matter gratuitously imported; can draw jealous attention to conceptions by which it has been both widened and perplexed; can relieve it from the pressure of unwarranted assumptions; can secure upon a field of doubtful speculations a temper of sobriety and even reserve; and can make contributions at least towards narrowing the issues upon which men have found or thought themselves to be divided." (Ibid. p.256). His attitude was thus one of enquiry and suspense of judgment, although the doctrine of conditional immortality provides all the relief from intolerable burdens which his soul desired. As we have seen, he was indisposed to accept it, the reason probably being in reality that it was lacking in that patristic support to which as a great churchman and a great Oxonian he attached crucial importance.

That suggestion seems to acquire greater plausibility from his anxiety to prove that the doctrine of eternal punishment was/

was a later development in the history of Christian thinking. Reference has already been made to his inferences from a survey of patristic teaching on this subject. He returns again to it in some paragraphs dealing with the three great creeds - those known as the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. In the case of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, he claims that the language, employed by those who framed them, was not intended to do more than to affirm the belief of the Christian Church in the great truth that eternal life is offered by God in Christ Jesus to all who are willing to receive it in sincerity and truth. He interprets their silence and reticence on other phases of eschatological doctrine as evidence that there was no desire or intention of going any further along a path beset by so many sources of perplexity.

In the case of the Athanasian Creed, Gladstone has to deal with words about which it is impossible to quibble. "It declares that men shall rise again with their bodies; shall render an account for their works; and shall, if they have done good, 'go into life everlasting'; if they have done evil, 'into everlasting fire.'" (Ibid p.230). Such teaching seems to leave no room for evasion or escape but Gladstone was very tenacious of his opinions, theological and otherwise, and he endeavours to abate the effectiveness of such testimony as that provided by the Athanasian Creed. He does so by drawing attention to the fact that it is not regarded by the Christian Church in general as standing on the same level as the other two creeds, except in/

in the Anglican Articles of Religion. That cannot be said to be very convincing.

Pursuing the purpose which has already been quoted that he did not aspire to more than the clearance of the ground to be traversed from such assumptions as may find no adequate foundation in revelation he specifies five of these. They may be recapitulated in his own words:

" (1) It is assumed that the Christian Revelation is designed to convey to us the intentions of the Almighty as to the condition, in the world to come, not of Christianity only, but of all mankind.

(2) It is assumed that, when the Scriptures speak of things eternal, they convey to us that eternity is a prolongation without measure of what we know as time.

(3) It is assumed that punishment is a thing inflicted from without, flagellum Tisiphone quatit insultans, and is something additional to, or distinct from the pain or dissatisfaction or loss, which under the law of nature stands as the appropriate and inborn consequence of misdoing.

(4) It is assumed that the traditional theory propounds, and the teaching of Scripture requires us to believe that of those who are to be judged as Christians, only a small minority can be saved.

(5) It is assumed under the doctrine of natural immortality that every human being has by Divine decree a field of existence commensurate with that of Deity itself." (Ibid p.233)

There/

There is nothing that calls for comment in these propositions except to draw attention once more to the fact that Gladstone was incapable of impartiality when his interests were deeply roused. In the last analysis, everything turns on the natural immortality of the soul. Gladstone refused to accept that doctrine, and there the discussion comes to an impasse. Reference may, however, be made to an ingenious argument which he adduces, based on the resurrection of the body. "But, according to Christian doctrine (1 Cor. XV. 36-44), the natural or mortal body has in it a seed from which shall spring the spiritual or immortal body. Let us consider how much this implies. The body is now the instrument and servant of the soul while it reciprocally exercises powerful influences upon it. But this body is not a mere appendage or vestment to the man: it is part of him. Thus far it seems, then, to be agreed that one part of our immortality is not natural, but is a gift flowing from the Incarnation." (Ibid p.239) The last words of that quotation with their suggestion that the resurrection of the body is due to the Incarnation hardly does justice to Paul's contention. He is appealing to the Resurrection of Christ as the proof of the bodily resurrection of mankind, and not as the cause. In any case, it is doubtful if Paul is dealing with the general question of human immortality in the verses to which Gladstone refers. He is rather concerned with the resurrection of the just.

It may well be that there is a covert allusion in the famous chapter to the doctrine sponsored by Greek philosophy that/

that the spirit of man will live for evermore but not his body. In the life to come, man will be a disembodied soul. Gladstone refers to Plato's teaching on this subject in a note. (Ibid p. 240). "Plato teaches that the body as well as the soul, though not like the gods of popular opinion, eternal, yet having once come into existence, is indestructible (Laws X. 940) There are souls of the sun and stars (Tim. 41; Laws X. 899). In man death (Laws VIII. 828) dissolves the union between them. Impurity (Phaedo 81 seqq) will prevent the total escape of the soul. But Socrates hopes to live wholly apart from the body, and this seems to represent the summit of the Greek doctrine concerning the body. These are simply dreams of speculation. As to the body, we find a metaphysical conception recorded on its behalf, but a manifest leaning of the speculative intelligence against it."

Gladstone appears to much better advantage when he turns to deal with certain implications of theories which are opposed to the historic doctrine of eternal punishment. These are based on the difficulty of harmonizing such a belief with the Divine character in all its plenitude of justice and mercy. It is hard to resist the temptation not to allude again, even at the expense of what may seem to be vain repetition, to the power which Butler wielded over him. In discussing these objections, he reveals himself at every turn as a true disciple of his master. He thus refers to it in a letter which he wrote in 1873. "Bishop Butler taught me, forty-five years ago, to suspend my judgment on things I knew I did not understand. Even/

Even with his aid I may often have been wrong; without him I think that I should never have been right." (quoted by R.W. Church. *Pascal And Other Sermons*. p.25).

The wisdom of such an approach to theological problems is illustrated in some observations which he has to make on the presence of evil in the world. "The thesis is, that evil may not, must not, always exist in the universe. But is this a real or solid indication? Does it not include within itself the materials of a hopeless dilemma, and therefore the doom of inevitable failure? Evil is to be employed or tolerated up to a certain date, and then, for the honour of God, it is to cease. But before that date, it has *ex hypothesi* been employed or tolerated; but where was the honour of God then? If it was compatible with the honour of God for a time, why may it not continue similarly compatible, so as to make use of it hereafter? If employed or tolerated, this was either with reason or without. If without reason we have no security against its continuance without reason. If with reason, how can we know that the reason which operated before may not also operate after." (*Ibid* p.243). Paul had said the same thing in an incomparably better way when he declared that the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Cors. I. 35). Up to a point man can think God's thoughts after Him but only to a point. Gladstone quotes with approval Newman's observation that the supreme mystery in regard to the sin of the world is not as to how it will end, but as to how it began.

The same spirit of reverent submission before the might
and/

and majesty of God, for which he was so deeply indebted to Bishop Butler, appears again in Gladstone's replies to criticisms of the Divine dealings with men based on the very structure of the human race. Why has God made us as we are and what we are? Is He absolutely free from all responsibility for the moral catastrophes which have dogged the human race, almost from its inception? Could these dread possibilities not have been foreseen, and provision made for forestalling them? Will the fallen angels be restored to the Divine favour, if evil be so offensive to God that He will yet abolish it completely? These problems are not new, and nothing new can be said about them. They savour more of the layman's approach to theology than that of the scholar, for there is a suggestion of crudity about them, and the same applies to these sermonic words in which Gladstone makes a final comment. "Faith and reason unite to assure us that the world to come will be a world of readjustment; where the first shall be last, and the last first, and where both good and evil shall uniformly receive their just rewards. This answer covers the whole of the adverse front. It both admits our incapacity together with our ignorance, and points with the finger of Divine hope to the prospect of their removal. But attempts at indication, unwarranted, precipitate, and mistaking our poor twilight of knowledge for broad daylight, both fail of their purpose, and recoil upon their projectors." (Ibid p.247). These are simple words but they go to the root of the whole matter.

The whole question of the future life is embarrassed with problems/

problems, and to the solution of one of these Butler makes a valuable contribution in Gladstone's judgment. It takes its rise in the existence of multitudes whose lives are both blameless and useful, and yet who seem to pass their days without being in touch with God and His Christ. What will be their destiny in the unseen world? Allied to that class of people, Gladstone mentions the cases of other men who, without adequate thought and preparation, enlist under the banner of Christ, and who signally fail to approve themselves as His true disciples by their inconsistent lives. Such difficulties seem to be ameliorated by Butler's teaching which, in Gladstone's view, leave unimpaired both the stringent and soothing aspects of the Gospel.

The theories in question are to be found in the third chapter of the First Part of the Analogy. They are primarily concerned with the moral government of God. It must be said at once that Gladstone's language goes beyond anything warranted by Butler's surmise which merely provides him with a point of departure. Indeed Gladstone admits that he may well have erred on the score of boldness in comparison with the circumspection of his intellectual leader. Butler himself does not do more than suggest that scientific discovery had enormously enlarged man's ideas as to the nature of the material universe. He accordingly advances the hypothesis that Providence may contemplate schemes infinitely vaster than the measure of men's minds. That seems to justify the inference that these may go far beyond this present life so far as human beings are concerned. In these circumstances Gladstone/

Gladstone reasons that there is at least a possibility that the sons of men will be so ravished with the beauty of holiness, when they at last get an opportunity to see it at the best advantage under new and favourable conditions, that they will fall a willing prey to its gracious spell. In this life they remained in the servitude of sin but, when they see things as they are, they will repent, and turn to God, and live for evermore. Gladstone expressly limits this class so that cases which are palpably hopeless are excluded. "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. XXII. 15). He does, however, claim to offer a door of hope to many who only need to see virtue in its true colours to yield allegiance to it.

It is remarkable that Gladstone extends such teaching to other beings than men. "Thus does Butler appear to have embraced the ideas, first, that the development of character effected through the Incarnation of Christ might operate upon beings subject to the Creator, but not belonging to the human race; and secondly, that, also within the limits of the human family itself, persons who had not during this life in any manner perceptible to us crossed the line which divides righteousness from its opposite, might make such further advances as would effect that transition, provided their characters were still in such a state as to leave them capable of effectual amendment." (Ibid p.251). Such doctrine, Gladstone adds, the larger part of/

of Christendom has always accepted, following the trail blazed by Paul in his prayer for Onesiphorus (2 Tim. I. 16).

Two remarks may be made on that position. One is that there is no convincing reason to believe that those, who refuse to turn to God in this life, would be ready to do so under more congenial conditions. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." (Luke XVI. 31). After all has been said and done, the glory and beauty of virtue were revealed in Christ during the days of His flesh, and yet there were comparatively few of His contemporaries saved. It has been well said that, when perfect holiness did appear amongst men, it was sent to the Cross. The other observation which falls to be made is that the general trend of the New Testament does not support the theory that there will be a second chance for repentance beyond the grave. Indeed Gladstone himself seems to return to a position of greater safety when he concludes his paper by referring to the doom which awaits those who refuse to believe on Christ that they might receive everlasting life. "Let there not be the presumption of assimilating hope or surmise with the solid truth of the great revelation. The specific and limited statements supplied to us are, after all, only expressions in particular form of immovable and universal laws, on the one hand, of the irrevocable union between suffering and sin; on the other hand, of the perfection of the Most High; both of them believed in full, but only in part disclosed, and having elsewhere, it may be, their plenary manifestation, in that day of the restitution of all things, for which a groaning and travailing creation yearns." (Ibid p.259)

CHAPTER XVIII.

Butler's verdict on determinism, whether theological or philosophical, as absurd provides Gladstone with a text for a discourse on the subject (Analogy. Part I. VI. 1; 8. Gladstone's Edition). One would expect him to take up the cudgels in favour of human freedom, and that is done in the essay with his characteristic courage and caution. The reader ends his perusal of what Gladstone has to say on this subject with the feeling that he has not grappled closely enough with its subtleties and profundities. The whole paper smacks of Dr Johnson's attitude to the matter, as these sentences will show. "The name of Jonathan Edwards suggested a discussion upon free will and necessity, upon which poor Boswell was much given to worry himself. Some time afterwards Johnson wrote to him, in answer to one of his lamentations: 'I hoped you had got rid of all this hypocrisy of misery. What have you to do with liberty and necessity? Or what more than to hold your tongue about it?' Boswell could never take this sensible advice; but he got little comfort from his oracle. 'We know that we are all free, and there's an end on't,' was his statement on one occasion, and now he could only say, 'All theory is against the freedom of the will, and all experience for it.'" (Leslie Stephen. Johnson. p.137). Incidentally it may be remembered that Dr Johnson and Bishop Butler were contemporaries. They do not seem to have met, although a rencontre would doubtless have provided material for the biographer and historian which would have been perennially refreshing.

The purpose of Gladstone's essay is thus set forth by himself. "The fundamental contention of this essay is, that the will is a faculty not homogeneous with intellect, passion, affection, or conscience; possessed of an originating power of self-action; entitled and enabled to carry with it the whole man; the immediate precursor of his action; and eventually incommensurable with what are commonly (for example by Jonathan Edwards) called motives, and may also be called inducements. (Ibid p.286)

The reference to Jonathan Edwards is doubly interesting, both because he has been mentioned in the reference to Dr Johnson, and also because he too was a contemporary of Bishop Butler. Edwards' famous treatise on the freedom of the will was published in 1754, eighteen years after Butler's Analogy which first appeared in 1736. In his paper on determinism Gladstone regards Edwards as the supreme champion of necessitarianism as well he might since Huxley pronounced the latter's arguments to be unanswerable. The strength of Edwards' case lies in the fact that he lays such stress on the inward nature of that necessity to which all men are subject, in that respect anticipating Hume. Edwards' reasoning is that the will responds inevitably to the strongest motive, including within that term all manner of incentives and inducements to action. The freedom of the will, or its power of self-determination thus becomes an illusion. The will is, in reality, comparable to a weather-vane responding inevitably and invariably to the prevailing wind, or, to borrow Gladstone's/

Gladstone's simile, characteristic in its felicity, like the hands of a clock which register the action of the mechanism with which they are connected.

Gladstone hardly does justice to Edwards' arguments on the ground that these are primarily directed against extreme Arminianism with its teaching that, in the last analysis, the salvation of the human soul depends wholly and solely on itself, and quite apart from the will of God, thus negating the doctrine of predestination. It is impossible to think that Edwards realised all that his position implied. He could not have been aware that he was playing into the hands of a school of thinkers with whose tenets he could have had no sympathy. It is one of the ironies of philosophical speculation that his name should be quoted as a defender of necessitarianism by atheists and agnostics. Edwards' famous book is only a defence of Calvinism. The bondage of the will which he maintains is relative rather than absolute. Man was created free but he has become the bond-servant of sin. He is dealing with the servitude of sin rather than with fatalism. He speaks of man's soul as wholly subject to evil, and none the less blameworthy on that score since, as he powerfully argues, necessary virtue is a rightful subject of praise as in the case of God Almighty. In the same way, necessary vice may justly be the subject of censure. Setting aside all question of merit or demerit, that fairly represents Edwards' position.

Gladstone's discussion of determinism is impaired in value by the fact that it is based on an old-fashioned theory of the human/

human personality. It is everywhere dominated by what has been called the faculty psychology, which regards the mind of man as a combination of separable factors, the chief being intelligence, emotion, and volition. A better view is to regard man as a unity so that, in every mental act and state, all the component parts come into play since they are really inseparable. The consequence is that the problem of freedom centres not in volition but in the entire personality. This improved theory of human mentality renders Gladstone's conception of the will as being the final court of appeal in the conflict of motives and emotions to be a mere fiction, as well as his vigorous protests against the inexorable application of the law of cause and effect.

When we turn to consider the problem of human freedom, as so conceived, we find ourselves confronted with an argument of Leslie Stephen, cited by Gladstone. It demands the most careful consideration. "Action proceeds from character; and character is not made by us, but determined by the Creator." (Ibid p.275). Gladstone does not seem to have grasped the point since he replies with the observation. "In man character is growth, the result of acts performed in series" (Ibid p.275). Surely character in such a context might be better denominated temperament, employing the word in its old sense as when men were classified by their temperaments in four sections, described as sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic. It will be obvious that, as these designations imply, temperament has a physical basis. Such considerations give colour to John Stuart/

Stuart Mill's contention that, if the nature of a man and his surroundings were fully known, it would be possible to predict infallibly his behaviour.

On the other hand, there is man's irrepressible consciousness of freedom and responsibility of which Gladstone writes in these terms. "It is admitted that, in general, the human being as an agent acts under the habitual and unquestioning impression that he is free; and so nearly does this belief approach to universality that, if it be untrue, the case is without example an instance of profound and cruel fraud perpetrated by nature upon her children." (Ibid p.277). Might not the same kind of reasoning be used to demonstrate the natural immortality of the soul? The spirit of man simply refuses to believe that death ends all, that being the real argument in Plato's *Phaedo*. Gladstone scarcely refers to this point which is surely worthy of thorough investigation. To return to the freedom of the will, it is indeed strange that, while an enlightened mind will make the fullest allowance for temperament, habits, and environment it will continue to insist on the reality of moral responsibility and to display self-congratulation and self-condemnation. The mystery may be left there like the relations of mind and body. It is more than enough that the Bible holds the balance between God's will and man's will, between necessity and freedom, in perfect poise.

Thou seemest human and divine,

The highest, holiest manhood, Thou:

Our wills are ours, we know not how;

Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.

With all his passionate insistence on freedom as against Hume, Edwards, Dr Holbach, and Leslie Stephen, Gladstone makes concessions regarding the abridgement of man's freedom, based on the sharp distinction which exists in all such discussions between theory and practice. If man be at liberty in theory, he is tremendously handicapped in practice, and that by a variety of factors. These Gladstone frankly admits, but he is fearful lest undue concessions be made to the advocate of determinism, and he hastens to explain these fetters of the will as due to infirmity and slackness, or to the irresistible pressure of factors like fear or hunger. "It might perhaps be added that if they have been or might be instances in which fear or weakness mounted up to a true necessity, such instances would no more affect the general doctrine of free volition than eclipses of the sun are taken into account in making estimates of its general operation." (Ibid p.291). In all his references to the subject he is unconsciously encumbered by a wrong view of human personality. The latter is like a cloud which moves together, if it moves at all, and unlike a locomotive with its gears and levers. There is a sentence from one of J.A. Froude's essays to the effect that Arminianism is nearer to our feelings, and Calvinism to the facts, and there the insoluble problem may be left with the remark *Solvitur ambulando*.

CHAPTER XIX.

In one of his letters Gladstone observes regarding Butler that the spirit of wisdom is in every line. (Lathbury II. p.150). That is the exaggeration, pardonable in such unbounded devotion to an author who had led his affections captive, but it still contains a substantial modicum of truth like most similar statements, for love is not blind but the secret of insight and vision. There are few writers whose pages can produce such an abundance of quotable aphorisms in proportion to their comparative paucity. Pregnant maxims and even phrases are always cropping up in Butler's pages. An example is found in a suggestive reference to teleology. "And as all observations of final causes, drawn from the principles of action in the heart of man, compared with the condition he is placed in, serve all the good uses which instances of final causes in the material world about us do; and both these are equally proofs of wisdom and design in the Author of nature: so the former serve to further good purposes; they show us what course of life we are made for, what is our duty, and in a peculiar manner enforce upon us the practice of it." (Sermons VI.1. p.92. Gladstone's Edition). That is Butler's obscure and clumsy way of saying that, just as there are many outstanding instances of purposiveness in the natural order, so human instincts bear witness to a Divine origin in the skill with which they are adapted and adjusted to their purposes, instinct being used in the most elastic sense as covering the whole field of impulse. The words just quoted are/

are taken for a sermon on compassion, preached on the first Sunday in Lent. They furnish an introduction to the preacher's contention that God has set pity over against pain so that deep calls unto deep.

Butler's wise words prompted Gladstone to the preparation of a paper on the pervasive presence of design in all that pertains to man's outward and inward life, whether as the proper subject of observation, reflection, or experience. He contends that, in every phase of existence, in so far as man has any knowledge of it, there is eloquent evidence of intelligent control and initiation. There is a striking sentence in that miniature masterpiece, his Homeric Primer, the finest thing that he ever wrote. It will serve to illustrate the point at issue. Writing of Athene he observes, "Athene is a true impersonation of the logos or reason; not of abstract intuitions, but of an operative understanding, which never errs in fitting means to ends." (Homeric Primer p.68). Gladstone has no doubts or difficulties in affirming that the whole creation is a network of illustrations as to how means and ends should be fitted to each other.

In his attempt to demonstrate that conviction, he only contrives to show that the only foundation on which it can securely rest is revealed religion. He labours to adduce all manner of evidence but when he has done all things, he unconsciously proclaims himself to be an unprofitable defender of the faith, the reason being that he does not seem to realise with sufficient vividness that, to the unenlightened understanding of a pagan observer, the same array of facts on which

he bases his optimistic conclusions might not lead to the same result. He was in constant peril of forgetting the debt which the rational interpretation of the universe owes to the Advent of Christ. He does not lay enough stress on the fact that there is no science where there is no Christianity, or Christian influence, no matter how feeble. In addition, Gladstone reveals everywhere his ignorance of the heights and depths in which such an investigation abounds. He knew but little of physical science, and that inevitably handicapped him when dealing with a subject where that is more or less essential.

Here are some examples of his argumentation, characterised by that power and penetration which are the hall-mark of all that he wrote. He reasons from the variety and number of factors whose combination is needed to achieve a certain effect that a Divine Intelligence must be ultimately responsible. Illustrations in support of that contention are produced from the realm of the inorganic, although it might be possible to produce a list of facts which would be equally disconcerting. The same principle is then verified by appeals to the organic kingdom, both in its animal and human sections. In referring to the animal kingdom, he calls attention to this interesting fact: "It appears to be admitted that, within the bounds of this region, the adjustment of means to ends are more numerous, nicer, and more elaborate, than in the realm of inanimate nature." (Ibid p.300).

In dealing with instances in the sphere of human life, he takes/

takes the emergence of genius as an example. The man is ready for the moment - a Drake for the Spanish Armada, a Ferdinand Foch for the German War of 1914. The argument is all the more impressive when we remember that genius is inexplicable in terms of heredity and environment, an obvious problem for the evolutionist. There is nothing in the ancestry or milieu of Socrates or Shakespeare to explain their appearance as and when it took place. Gladstone's claim seems to be justifiable when he writes, "Indeed, I have read, in a negative treatise of great ability, the remark that, were it not for one living in a time when all Divine interference with the order of nature has been disproved, it might almost be supposed to be established by this particular class of phenomenon." (Ibid p.302). He might well have instanced the Incarnation as the supreme example.

Oh, loving wisdom of our God!

When all was sin and shame,

A second Adam to the fight,

And to the rescue came.

He reaches a similar conclusion of a survey of human history, although it is not so easy to homologate his confidence in tracing a preparatio evangelica in classical history on a scale and with a degree of precision which are decidedly unusual. His zeal surely outruns discretion when, in other books, he discovers evidences of New Testament conceptions in Homeric theology. As an act of faith, based on the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified, such teaching may/

may be endorsed but not otherwise. Thus he writes of Athene and Apollo in this somewhat fanciful strain. "In her there is a marked resemblance to the Hebrew tradition of the Logos. He rather corresponds with the Seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head, while the serpent bruised the woman's heel. (Landmarks of Homeric Study. p.73). While one cannot but rejoice in Gladstone's strong faith which he shares with that of the New Testament writers, one wonders if, like them, he had been as conscious of the shadows as of the light. To Mr H.A.L. Fisher European history seemed to be "a play without a plot".

This innate simplicity of mind and heart rendered him insensible to all manner of perils and problems. Thus he brushes aside Herbert Spencer's contention that the Absolute is indeed mind, but it is essentially unknowable. Gladstone stigmatizes such a suggestion as "a bewildering, nay, a befooling conclusion." In the fuller light of revelation such language is warranted but not otherwise. He tries conclusions with Spencer on his own ground by arguing that there is compelling evidence of purposiveness in many aspects of the material universe, so that we can argue from the parts to the whole. But that step is scarcely warranted, for, in such a connection, the part is not like a sample of flour or leather which can be made the basis for a large order with complete confidence. It is rather true that the whole is different from, and greater than, the sum of its parts, for better or for worse.

His/

His references to chance as a possible explanation of what is identified as purposiveness is again somewhat cavalier. The hypothesis is set aside almost at once as self-condemned. As a great mathematician, one would have expected Gladstone to have taken account of such a possibility as is envisaged in the famous sally regarding a thousand monkeys tapping a thousand typewriters for ten thousand times ten thousand years and thousands of thousands, and eventually producing the text of Paradise Lost. It may be the height of mathematical improbability, but it is not thereby impossible. In this case, Gladstone seems to go beyond Butler in his wholesome emphasis on probability as the very guide of life for finite beings - apart from revelation, and the things most surely believed.

A brief discussion of evolution discloses the same fundamental defect. Again he seems to be utterly unconscious of the fact that his whole thinking and outlook were steeped in Christianity, and not a whit the worse for that. To a mind like that of Gladstone, evolution was quite compatible with the teaching of the Bible on the Divine origin of the universe. It was merely the substitution of one *modus operandi* for another. He makes no mention of the indisputable fact that, although so many inventions and discoveries are foreshadowed by the Bible in exquisite symbolism, that cannot be said of evolution. Again he takes no account of the fact that to an infidel, such an one as Professor Samuel Alexander would have classified as "Deity-blind," evolution may be perfectly congenial to his outlook, whereas special creation cannot be in the very nature of/

of things.

While dealing with Gladstone's opinions regarding evolution, it is desirable that account should be taken of an interesting passage in a letter which he wrote to the Duke of Argyll in 1895, about three years before he died. "The idea of creation is without doubt deeply engrained in Butler. The case of the animal creation had a charm for him, and in his first chapter he opens, without committing himself, the idea of their possible elevation to a much higher state." (Morley III. p.521). The last sentence is echoed by another in a communication to some correspondent, where he refers to evolution as a Butlerish idea. But that is reading into Butler what that great prelate never intended to convey.

CHAPTER XX.

A final essay on miracles seems to owe its origin more to Hume's famous attack than to the place assigned to them by Butler as evidence for the truth of Christianity. Hume's polemic is well known. It is thus epitomized by Newman as quoted by Gladstone. "It is experience only which gives authority to human testimony, and it is the same experience which assures us of the laws of nature. When these two kinds of experience are contrary the one to the other, we are bound to subtract the one from the other. We have no experience of the violation of natural laws, and much experience of the violation of truths. So we may establish it as a maxim that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it the foundation of a system of religion." (Ibid p.312). In brief, Hume's argument amounts to this. It is much more likely that the witnesses to the occurrence of a miracle were consciously or unconsciously mistaken than that the latter actually happened, since such supernatural interpositions cannot be verified in actual experience, while examples of human fallibility are all too frequent.

Gladstone's rejoinder would have been improved in effect if he had come more quickly to the chief weakness in Hume's criticism. To his allegation that human untrustworthiness is only too common, it may be replied that, if the evidence be of such a kind as to countervail that possibility, the force/

force of his contention is substantially reduced. These conditions are fulfilled by the Resurrection of Our Lord, that supreme miracle whose authentication undergirds and underpins all Biblical signs and wonders. The quantity and quality of the evidence on which it rests are unsurpassed. If it be not credible, there is an end of reliance on human testimony. There is no event in universal history so well substantiated as the fact that Our Lord died and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. It is strange that Gladstone should have neglected to mention this impregnable line of defence.

He rather seeks to defend the validity of human testimony by an appeal to scientific discovery. The conclusions of scientific research are accepted as trustworthy, although the overwhelming majority of people have neither the ability nor the opportunity to verify them. They trust the specialist more or less implicitly. "Let us test this proposition" he writes "by comparing with miracle all the facts scientifically ascertained in connexion with what we may call the two infinities, that of greatness upwards, and of smallness downwards. Take the heavenly bodies and their distances, with their laws of motion in the region upwards; and the particles on which the scent of dogs appears to operate upon the scale running downwards." (Ibid p.323). It is obvious that in both cases experimental verification is out of the question save in the case of a microscopic minority.

The whole essay is written in Gladstone's best vein with fine/

fine go and gusto. To Hume's objection that miracles are contrary to experience, Gladstone replies with the obvious rejoinder that human experience is an immeasurable entity so that it is hard to say what it includes, and what it excludes. "Let A come and allege his miracle. B denounces it as false, because it is contrary to experience; that is, to B's experience. But how does B know that it is contrary to A's experience? As in the famous illustration of ice asserted in the tropical plains to exist elsewhere, what is impossible for the one may be familiar to the other." (Ibid p.314).

He also calls attention to the limited character of human knowledge regarding the universe and its laws. If that were relevant and true in Gladstone's day, it carries even greater weight at this present hour when scientific discovery has enlarged so enormously the horizon of knowledge. "But the impossibility, which shuts out the testimony altogether, never can be shown except by proof that every avenue is blocked by which the miracle might come in. Any law of nature, or created things, might open such an avenue: and Hume's argument is of no avail until we have shown that we know every such avenue that is now in existence, and know that all of them are blocked." (Ibid p.315). But these things we shall never know until God is pleased to reveal them to us.

Gladstone seems to revel in the subject, adducing one argument after another in favour of supernatural intervention in human affairs. Here is one based on the analogy of anomalies in/

in nature. He well says that, in many instances, such deviations from the normal can be justified on the score that thereby some good and useful purpose is subserved. He endeavours to clinch the point by one of his rare references to forestry, all the more remarkable in view of his well-known fondness of felling trees as a pastime. Allusions to this hobby are as rare as references to carpentry in the teaching of the Divine Carpenter of Nazareth, or to fishing in the Epistles of Peter. This is what he says. "I have often observed in woodcutting that when a tree threw out near the ground beginnings of roots unusually large, this was a customary provision made by nature to compensate, by an outward projection of unusual strength, for the weakness produced by some rot latent in the interior trunk." (Ibid p.315). In the same way, the abnormal condition of the world as the result of sin makes the occurrence of miracles highly probable. Referring to the abnormal in general, he draws attention to the fact that the existence of these on a fairly large scale is admitted solely on the grounds of human testimony, although they cannot be said to justify themselves for any very obvious reason.

Gladstone explores many phases of the subject as they would strike such a mentality as his, the mind of the man in the street magnified to a degree sufficient to constitute genius. He argues in favour of miracles on the grounds that mind often dominates matter as in the case of a personal agent to which passing reference has already been made in connection with his essay/

essay on Robert Elsmere. In the same way it may be lawfully supposed that God by the exercise of His will and power, can make such changes as a man when he lifts a book from a table in defiance of the law of gravitation. He can surely suspend or transcend the natural laws which He Himself has ordained inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. These are the stock arguments of popular apologetic, and none the less valid or valuable on that account. As Jowett of Balliol once observed, it is no sign of superior intelligence to alienate the common people.

Hume had also questioned the argument based on fulfilled prophecy for the truth of the gospel. He based his adverse comments on the grounds that it is open to the same objections as miracles. To this Gladstone rejoins thus: "Now the term miracle is used in more senses than one. It has been said by Butler that the Incarnation is a miracle, but a miracle that proves nothing, and that requires to be proved itself. This is not the stamp of miracle with which Hume's Essay deals. For him, and he follows the ordinary use of the term, a miracle is an exercise of Divine power not only outside of ordinary law, but also made visible to the eyes or ears of men, and thereby capable of being largely and generally reported by human testimony. Before the miracle, I observe a man blind; after it I find that he sees, and I report accordingly. Only in this form can Hume bring his artillery to bear upon it." (Ibid p.326). In the case of prophecy, there can be no such appeal/

appeal to human testimony since the prophecy and its fulfilment may be separated by prolonged periods, and by their very nature. "When our Lord told the disciples that He would rise from the dead, this prediction was no miracle for them, until its fulfilment." (Ibid p.326). It is obvious that, if the prediction were not miraculous, its fulfilment was, although a case might easily be argued that both belong to the supernatural order. The miracle surely consists in the congruity between the forecast and its fulfilment. Gladstone's attempt to answer Hume seems to fail in virtue of its excessive subtlety. The fineness of his distinctions tends to defeat their own end. It would have been a thousand times better to admit that prophecy is a miracle. It would have strengthened Gladstone's case for there are mental miracles as well as moral and material, the Bible being a supreme example of the first, and Biblical prophecy another. In fairness to Gladstone, let it be said that he set much greater store by such moral and spiritual miracles as the Incarnation and the Church of Christ than by material signs and wonders which he somewhat minimizes (Analogy p.247. Note.).

CHAPTER XXI.

In the first volume of his "Recollections", Morley observes "that our opinions are not more important than the spirit and temper with which they possess us" (p.103). That statement applies with special force to Gladstone's theology. Its abiding interest value lies not so much in its intrinsic merit as in the fact that it represented the rationalisation of his religious experience, especially in view of the part that the thought of God played in his career. What has been finely said of his eloquence, is true in every phase and aspect of his life, "But even after he had ceased to stand forth as the champion of the church he loved, religious feeling continued to be the woof that crossed the warp of his noblest and most stirring eloquence" (Cambridge History of English Literature, 14. p.135). It is not too much to say that his profound piety was one of the secrets, if not indeed the chiefest, which explained the wonderful contribution which he made to Victorian England. In such circumstances his religious convictions and theological opinions will always be worthy of attention.

The range of the latter will never cease to be a subject of astonishment, especially in view of the fact that he made contributions to various departments of human learning of such dimensions that they would have made the reputation of any ordinary man. In view of that, the extent of the theological field, which he managed to cover, must indeed be regarded as remarkable/

remarkable. It is true that there is nothing approaching thorough treatment but, as far as he goes, his discussions are always suggestive, not so much on account of their erudition, as displaying the reactions of a marvellous mind to the problems of divinity. Dr Johnson wrote of Goldsmith that he touched nothing which he did not adorn, and the words may be adapted to Gladstone in the form that he touched nothing which he did not illuminate.

There are certain common features to be found in almost all that he wrote on theological topics. These may be profitably recapitulated in some closing paragraphs. For instance, there is his combativeness. Hardly a line which he penned on religion or theology fails to reveal a polemical bias. As would be expected, that is positively obtrusive in the famous pamphlets dealing with Romanism. These have not been discussed in this dissertation since they are more political than theological. Gladstone was a redoubtable controversialist in theology as in every other walk of life. He acknowledges with deep contrition his vulnerable temper, as he called it, although it was kept under complete control. Such a disposition made him a formidable antagonist as even his disquisitions on theology prove. In this particular, he followed Butler who, if he be not always on the offensive, is certainly on the defensive. For both there is always an antagonist in the offing.

At the first blush, that may seem to detract from the excellence of his theological work, but deeper reflection will lead to the conclusion that the opposite is more likely to be true/

true. The New Testament resounds with the note of controversy. The Son of Man Himself declared that He had not come to send peace but a sword. When theological polemics were prosecuted in the fair and courteous spirit which Gladstone never failed to show on all occasions, they may well prove to be the means whereby error is exposed and truth magnified. Unfortunately Gladstone's zeal occasionally outran discretion so that the strength of his feelings tended to deflect his judgment, and to prevent him from doing full justice to both sides of a case. He was apt to conform to the type who see only one side of a question, the whole of that, and admit of no other.

That leads naturally to a reference to his dogmatism. With all his reservations and qualifications which were many, he leaves the careful reader of his papers in no doubt at all that he is absolutely convinced with regard to the truth of what he believed. He would have found congenial associates in that company of ecclesiastics to whom Cromwell had to address the rebuke that it was possible that they were mistaken. The result was that he made himself rather absurd at times, especially in his controversies with Huxley, in view of the fact that he was handicapped by his comparative ignorance of the subjects on which he was so ready to pronounce judgment. The same defect appears in the confidence with which he challenges the historic teaching of the Christian Church on the immortality of the soul. It does not seem to have struck him that he was crossing swords with men who were immeasurably wiser and more learned/

learned that himself. In this respect he contrasts with the caution so conspicuous in Butler's books.

On the other hand, his sincerity covers a multitude of sins. There are no mental reservations in what Gladstone has to say. His loins were always girt about with truth. That is proved by the radical changes which his views on other subjects underwent. He was not afraid to change his convictions and to make public avowal of the fact. As we have seen, his theological opinions scarcely altered during more than half a century. The result was that they became hopelessly old-fashioned but that did not abash Gladstone. He was ready at the end of his career to do battle for beliefs which he had embraced in early life. When one considers the exalted position which he occupied, it was indeed no small matter that he should publicly proclaim himself as ranged on the side of a minority. In the case of his allegiance to the High Church Movement he swam with a flowing tide. With respect to his fidelity to conservative and evangelical theology, he swam against the tide. He had ever the courage of his convictions.

It only remains to comment again on the evangelical sympathies which characterised him to the end. This was neither blind nor unthinking for he says of the evangelical party in one of his essays that it seemed to be unable to retain permanently the loyalty of its ablest sons (Gleanings pp.233-4). In other respects attention has already been drawn to the fact that on such distinctive principles of evangelical theology as the/

the inspiration of the Bible and justification by faith, he did not agree completely with his party, while his churchmanship was far removed from that of those who believed as fervently as he did in evangelical truth. Nevertheless the foundations of his piety were laid in the Pauline version of Christianity. When he was twelve years of age, his mother wrote of him that he was truly converted to God in the evangelical sense, and he never forgot it, nor forsook it.

There is touching proof of that in his end which was preceded by many weeks of pain heroically endured. He was a great authority on hymnology amongst other things, his individuality being as conspicuous in his preferences there as in so many other ways. Keen evangelical though he was, he did not care for Charles Wesley's hymn, "Jesus, Lover of my soul" while he loved "Rock of Ages" out of a pure heart fervently. As he lay on his death-bed, he often repeated Newman's magnificent lines, "Praise to the Holiest in the height", and Cowper's pathetic verses, "Hark! my soul, it is the Lord". There is an old saying that, if one may be allowed to make a people's songs, one may let who will make their laws. That is as applicable to the gospel as to legislation. Doctrine is but the scientific formulation of the new song. That being so, Gladstone's fundamental evangelicalism is surely placed beyond all doubt or question so that, wherever the gospel of grace is preached, he can be cited as one who proved in public and private life the power of Our Lord's Resurrection.

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words is that Gladstone did not regard the doctrine of justification by faith as being taught in the New Testament, especially in the Pauline Epistles. That is a strange remark to make of a man who was such a persistent student of the Bible, but no other explanation can be found for the teaching of the Thirty-Nine Articles on the subject leaves no room for dubiety. There only remains one theory which may relieve the difficulty. In his edition of Butler's Works (2. p. 434), Gladstone prints the report of a conversation between the Bishop and John Wesley. In its course Butler suggests that saving faith must be meritorious. Wesley refutes that error, and Butler seems to acknowledge that there had been some misunderstanding. It may well be that Butler's criticism had made a deep impression on Gladstone for he regarded all that the former wrote with almost superstitious veneration.

Yet another observation to be made on Gladstone's views of the Atonement is that he insists with great earnestness that sins are freely pardoned by God in Christ only on condition that men walk in newness of life and sin no more. Men must not continue in sin that grace may abound. Gladstone had no use for antinomianism of that type as became such a champion of righteousness as he undoubtedly was. When his discussion of this truth is examined, more narrowly, it will be found that he uses language which lends itself too easily to the doctrine that amendment, or at least, a desire to amend, becomes almost a condition rather than a consequence of Divine pardon. "There are /